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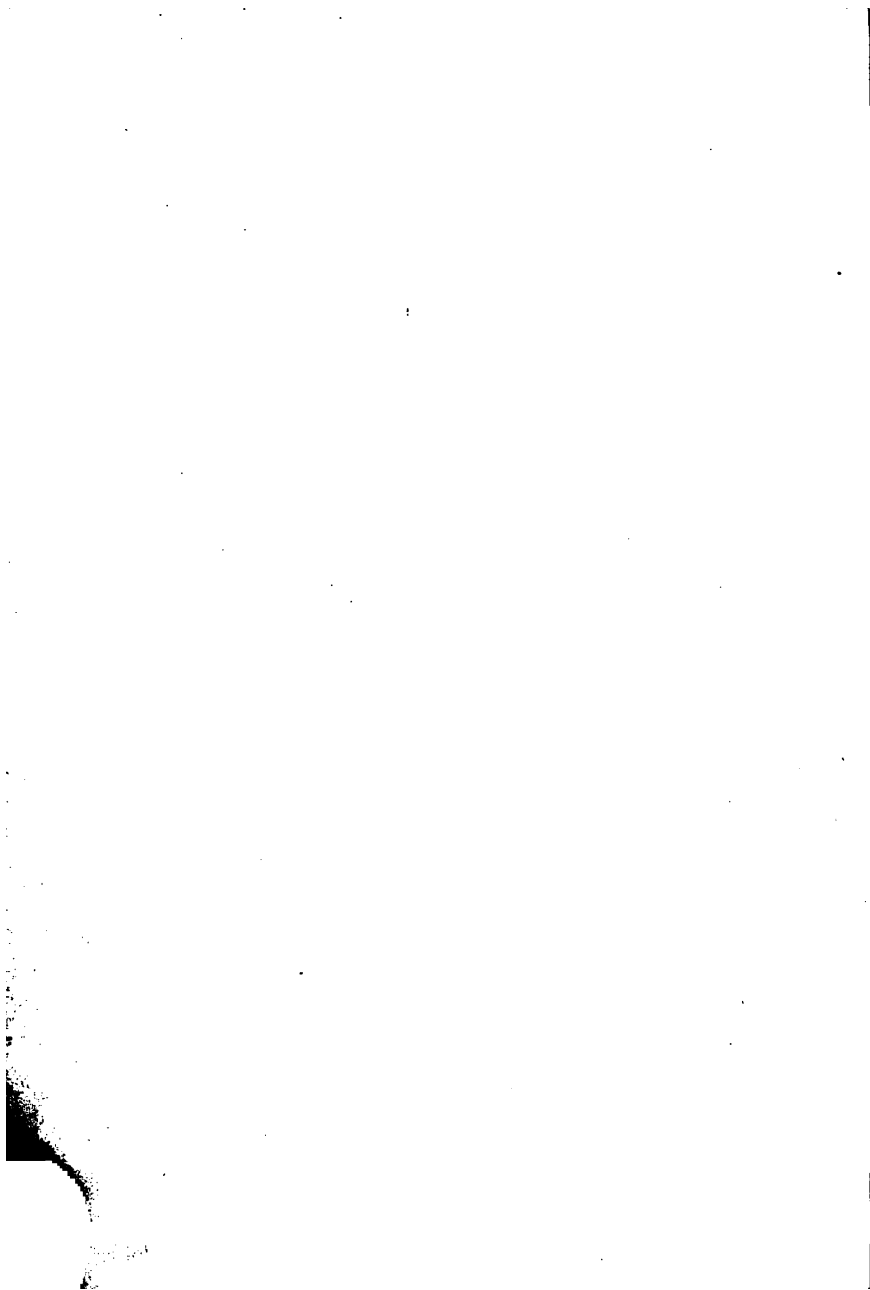


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A MODERN IDEAL



5973
A MODERN IDEAL

A DRAMATIC POEM

BY

SIDNEY ROYSE LYSAGHT

LONDON

KEGAN PAUL, TRENCH & CO., 1, PATERNOSTER SQUARE

1886

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L993mm

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PREFACE.

WE are accustomed to hear it complained that the visage of Romance has become so wrinkled by time, her freedom of limb so fettered by knowledge and the elaborate machinery of our civilization (suggesting less the divine maid than a disorderly dowager between two policemen), that we must no longer expect to find themes for poetry in our midst. The regret is perhaps as old as the days of our anthropoid ancestors, the unimaginative among whom we may picture bewailing the innovation of millinery into the realms of tattoo as being similarly indicative of the prosaic tendency of development. But the case is at present spoken of by so many as a hopeless one, that it becomes necessary to remind the desponding that it is as unreasonable to assert that poetry cannot be found under the manifold trappings and coverings of our modern society, as

that sculpture would be an impossible art in any age or land in which clothes were worn.

Poetry is the sculpture of thought ; it strips off the coverings of fashion ; it works with the nude—with the soul.

It is a matter for surprise and regret that the themes for poetry which exist in our modern world, the underlying marvel and beauty of present, visible, real life, should have been so far neglected by those poets—poets of the highest order—who are among us ; and that even when the spirit of their work is modern, it should have breathed itself into a past rather than a present world. Disregarding that wax-work, the story in rhyme, the present has been almost wholly left to the statistician and the novelist. Fortunately among the latter are some (conspicuously one, but he is poet also) who have rescued some marble from the quarry for purposes other than shop-front building, and have laboured to raise the Muse of Fiction to equal rank with her of History. But it was for the poet, beyond all others, to assert supremacy here. In contemporary life he should find his best material, and it is his first duty to interpret that beauty, that wonder and pathos of existence, which dwell in the world around him ; that beauty which exists in all times, but grants a new point of view to each new age, and to which it becomes more than

ever a duty to bear witness when there seems to be any fear of its presence being forgotten. If the poet has held aloof from the sanctuary in the midst of the modern world, which has become the playground of the innumerable unmannerly offspring of fiction, and admonishes him who ventures entrance that "fools rush in where angels fear to tread," the fool in question may take comfort in the reflection that the angel, in this case, fears not on account of the holiness of the ground, but lest he should soil his own feet; although as a veritable angel it is his duty to hallow that sanctuary by his presence.

It is hardly necessary for the present writer to say that he knows the following poem to be a wholly inadequate demonstration of the value of this material which he has worked with, and holds in such high estimation; but the failure itself may be useful, if it shows that the marble was worthy of better treatment, and induces the more skilful to seek it for statuary purposes. The urchin who makes a preliminary slide and falls on the vacant ice, may prove that the ice is sound to the skater who afterwards illuminates its surface with the letters of the alphabet.

A word of explanation may be given as to the structure of this poem. In a poem, as in a building, there are certain parts which do not admit of decoration—certain parts which must be in themselves

unpoetical, but are nevertheless necessary to its harmony when viewed as a whole. Thus prose becomes the most artistic possible form of expression, when the subject or occasion would make more ornate forms incongruous. A rough attempt has here been made to bring the structure of the language into proportion with the underlying thought, the lyrical portions expressing the emotions which are unspoken (and some of which in actual life never can be uttered because ordinary speech will not convey them), while the dialogue is either in blank verse or prose. At the risk of the charge of vulgarity, the colloquial language of low life has been introduced in one or two scenes, where it seemed false to use verse or even polite prose; to express a street Arab's feelings in iambics appearing a greater sin against art than to adopt his own vocabulary, and there being no justification for a middle course. An endeavour is also made to indicate the individualities of different characters by different metres.



DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

ARTHUR PILGRIM.

HERBERT STAFFORD.

HENRY GREY.

ALEXANDER CAMPBELL.

FLORA PILGRIM.

EILEEN CAMPBELL.

DAVID.

NELLY.

DICK.

Dick's Father.

SMUDGE (*and* DUST, *his dog*).

MAITLAND.

MAURICE.

GEOFFREY, PAUL, *and Fishermen.*

Soldiers, etc.

A MODERN IDEAL.

PROLOGUE.

WORLD of our wakening ! home in the depths of the
Infinite,
Fall'n to humanity ! O little sun-lighted wanderer,
In the vast spaces unknown, and eternal, and limit-
less !
We, too, have come in our turn to behold our inheri-
tance.
So, while thou still hast pursued the old course of thy
pilgrimage,
Others have come and have gone—have beheld and
inherited ;
Paused in thy summer noons, treasured some part of
thy music,
And felt the sweet influence reaching them out of thy
silences ;

Fought, and kept watch on thee. Lo! it is day; soon
the night cometh.

This is our watch; we have come to relieve the weary
ones.

Simple and beautiful, round us the paths of our
dwelling-place;

Forms of life clear to us, glimpses of other worlds
journeying;

Soul of life veiled to us, under the simple and visible,
Ever suggested a meaning beyond that is fathomless;
Knowledge of man and the record the ages bequeath us
Of working, and hoping, and loving, and sinning, and
sorrowing;

Promise of something unfound, of labour awaiting us;
Shores of new life to discover, far fields to be har-
vested.

This is the picture we look upon; this is our heritage.

Life! oh, the joy of it! oh, the wild pulse of it! oh,
the warm heart of it!

Oh, the sweet pictures, the glorious mysteries, grand
possibilities,

Strength of it, fire of it, dear love and friendship; yet,
ah, the great want in it.

Wonders on every hand; all things so strange and so
wonderful,

They who have stood as we stand looking forth to the
Infinite,

They who have looked to the depths of their own
spirit's consciousness,
Find that the commonest pathway must lead into
Wonderland.

Shadow of earth thrown afar on dim paths of the
universe—

Heavenly pathways, lone regions of chaos and *nebulæ* ;
Systems, and spaces, and worlds, and more spaces
beyond again.

Thought of the life of it all, of the beings, existences,
Things inconceivable, actions gigantic, unthinkable—
All having place at this moment, while here uncon-
cernedly

Quiet, uninfluenced, here in the fields in the summer-
time,

Our life goes on ; and the scent of the roses and
lavender

Comes in the breath of our breezes familiar and dear
to us.

Our little fraction of life, self-contained in its quietness ;
All the great universe warring, achieving, and travelling,
Seeming but background to finish our own little picture.

Everything wondrous, suggestive, with meaning inborn
in it ;

Everything stamped with the mark of eternal signifi-
cance.

Wonder of motions, mutations, imagined stability,
Minglings, dissolvings, and matter through all indes-
tructible.

Wonders of wonders—the wonder of life and its origin.
Wonder that any life should be at all, any universe.
Wonder that since it exists, and we find ourselves part
of it,
Still we should know it not, never the secret nor source
of it.

Life which the eye cannot see, creatures infinitesimal ;
Life in the ocean abyssms upheaving new continents ;
Life in the grass and the flower, and the insect that
crawls on it ;
Beautiful life in the tree, and the birds that are singing
there ;
Life in the four-footed beast, and the life of humanity ;
Life in the worlds beyond worlds, unbeheld and un-
thinkable,
Each to the other akin, and a part of one principle,
Everywhere myriad life, and the cause of it mystery.

Wonder of matter, the strength and the order per-
vading it,
Law without effort obeying, its law made its harmony ;
Wonder of matter which cannot be found disobedient ;

Wonder of spirit of man, and his will, and his steadfastness,
Strong to resist, and his power of sublime disobedience,
Power to disobey law, and to work his own punishment.

Wonder of hate and forgiveness, of wrong and self-sacrifice ;
Climax of power and love, unrequited self-sacrifice.
O glory and summit of life ! if but once in the universe
One life has perished itself for the sake of another life,
Then by that act were the universe sacred for evermore !

Wonder of commonplace ; wonder of overfed citizens,
Full of the thought of the markets, and gossip, and bartering,
Blind to the wonder of life and their intricate destiny ;
Wonder of blindness, society, thoughtless security ;
Wonder of friendship in life, and of love the sweet bond of it—
Meeting of hands and of lips, and of souls self-surrendering ;
Wonder of simple belief, and thanksgiving, and holiness ;
Wonder of lives without doubt, full of quiet and certainty,
Taking the blows of the world as the stripes of a Father's love,

Seeing the earth as a pathway to lead to His dwelling-
place ;
Wonder of vice, and of sin, and polluted humanity ;
Wonder of pleasures of idlers and solace of luxury :—
Stars overhead, and the wind in the trees by the grave-
yard !

Wonder of beauty, and wonder of senses to joy in it ;
Everything doing its work in its place growing beautiful,
Strength in the garment of tenderness, love become
visible,
Flower of the tree of life blossoming out through the
Infinite.

Wonder of sleep and of sleepers, the star-lighted
hemisphere ;
Half the world resting from weariness, touched with
forgetfulness ;
Wonder of death, and the chill, and the awe, and the
doubt of it.
Yesterday only we met, and to-morrow thou leavest us.
Is this the end ? Ah, we hope—nay, we swear it is
well with thee !
Feel that our labour and love, and our hopes are not
fooling us,
Else had life ceased in its birth, of its own weakness
perishing ;

Else all had failed long ago, like a lie, nor the universe
Grown to the glory we see, with such pain at the
heart of it.

Wonder of progress—sense always of something un-
perfected

Moving us onward—O light leading on, Ideality!

Leading men one by one, leading the races on one
by one,

On to the better, through paths of eternal develop-
ment!



PART I.



SCENE I.—*Room in the old house overlooking meadows, stretching to the sea. An evening in summer.*

FLORA (*sings*).*

Walks in the daytime through an old meadowland ;
Stars in the twilight, seen through the shadowland
 In their old places ;
Voices familiar now again greeting me,
Well beloved glances now again meeting me,
 In the old faces.

Thoughts of the old time, out of that laughter time,
Mellowed and deepened, brought back in this aftertime,
 One on another ;
Giving us glimpses of now unbeholden days,
Binding us each to each, sweethearts in olden days,
 Sister and brother.

Wide is our home here, few are our years in it ;
Joys there are many, and sorrow, and tears in it,
 Labour long, strife long ;

* With the exception of this song, all contained in the scene is a record of what is passing through the thoughts of each, nothing being spoken.

Meetings and partings, and change on change following ;

But there remains to us, everything hallowing,

Love that is life-long.

[She continues playing old airs and quiet music.

PILGRIM.

It was twilight as we came down the hill to the little, unknown village. The shadow of the earth was spreading among the spaces, where a few stars shone. There was a sound of wind in the trees by the roadside—a long, far-off sound, as of the voice of the sea on a summer night, in the ears of one whose window opens upon a lonely shore. And, as we passed on downward into the village, the music of muffled bells came over the tree-tops, filling our hearts with strange dreams, and, as it were, memories of things which had never happened. And it seemed that the world around us was now for the first time beheld, and the meaning of its voices now first gathered. And through the dim land came a message ; and from the music of the bells, and the sorrow of the wind, and the depths of our own hearts, a voice, saying, “It is good to be here on the earth. There is a watch to be kept, a guard to be relieved ; it is time to relieve the weary ones.”

* * * * *

The world drops into the twilight. There is a sound of music in our ears, leading us gently where it will. For now we are looking at the gardens we made when we were children. The rooks are coming home to the elm trees. The horses are being led down to the water ; and there is a smell of wallflowers in the air. And now it is an evening in the winter ; and we are gathered round the fire before the lamps are lit. He is telling us tales of the Indian seas, and the far off woods ; and the wind is roaring in the chimney. And, in the midst of it, one comes in, and tells us that the storm has taken the fishing-boats, and they are being wrecked along the shore. And we are down on the shore watching it all—the people gathered together, the women crying and praying, and the sea rushing over the little breakwater ; and all darkness and doubt outside on the ocean. And then we see the boats coming in, and the men standing in the water, banded together, to help them, and singing as they haul on the ropes.

* * * * *

Nay, but we are far away in the future, and we are looking back. There is something we have forgotten, something we have missed. We are walking together through the fields in the evening, down to the sea. We are leaning over the gate, and looking at the line of far-off waters, and the sails of the fishing-boats

away in the sunset. We hear the voices of some who are going away from us, and we are sad. Then, as the darkness falls, and we are going homeward, the wind grows louder in the trees, the leaves are blown away ; the plover are calling, but we cannot see them ; and, as we speak, our voices sound far off and strange.

STAFFORD.

My brothers ! to be here on earth is good,
Met at the outset of our unknown ways.
This is the first home of our brotherhood ;
This is our first love's earliest trysting-place.
And we are here on earth as in a school ;
In seeing death, to learn what life may mean ;
To find out what should be from what has been ;
To learn to serve ere we can know to rule.
Through danger to win strength ; by wanderings
In darkness, find the value of the light ;
Look through the finite to the infinite ;
And labour among perishable things,
Before our hands acquire truth and might
To work in the eternal harvestings.
Therefore, my brothers, let us take good heart
Whate'er befall us now ; and when we part,
And, one by one, pass outward through the door
Of this, our first home, to the world beyond,
Even its woes will be a lasting bond
Of brotherhood between us evermore !

How long shall we sit idle in the sun,
Like servants who are waiting to be hired ?
Some grow already with the burden tired ;
The labourers are few, the work undone !

Come, let us bear the burden of the day !
Working among the foremost pioneers,
For the good labour's sake, as volunteers,
Not as the hired servant for the pay.

Is it a noble thing to sit and dream,
While others toil and sorrow day and night ?
To smile, while others perish in the fight,
And with their life blood give our thoughts a theme ?

The time is come ; we must no longer sleep :
First let us fight, and slumber afterward.
There is a good thing given us to guard ;
Under the stars there is a watch to keep.

So now the day of our inaction ends—
The pleasant time, secure from cares and dangers,
Which, in the mighty world of human strangers,
Brought us together here and made us friends.

A meeting wrought by many a slight event
An outcome shapen, buffeted and hurled
Among the forces of an unformed world ;
The ages failed us not. We are content.

And we have lingered, it may be, too long.

Our ways must part ; but through new paths and
strange

We keep old love, as harmonies may change,
And bear with them the notes of ancient song.

Ah, here, kind faces in the chamber dim,
The scent of summer through the window blown,
Wind-rippled grass, and fields of hay half mown,
Low purple hills, the ocean's distant rim ;

Slow mists along the river-valley creeping ;
The sorrowful night wind waking in the firs
The music of æolian dulcimers ;
Far-stretching meadows where the kine are sleeping.

The close of the last day of the old life ;
The last look of the old untroubled years.
To-morrow we must join the pioneers,
To-morrow we must enter on the strife.

GREY.

The most humorous figure in the world is a sentimental man. Sentiment is becoming in a woman ; it is to her nature what a fine complexion is to her face—a bloom to be guarded from exposure. But to see a full-grown man swaddling himself against the hard facts of existence, brooding on the addled

egg of early fancies and moribund creeds, is as pitiful as if he strove to keep whiteness of hand and rose bloom of cheek gloved and shaded against the elements. It is also pathetic to mark the inevitable progress of discolouration. Having myself no moral complexion to lose, I watch the course in others with the more diversion. Here are two cases. Pilgrim is the most unpractical dreamer within my knowledge. He believes in himself and loves humanity, and knows neither. He feels a vocation to perform some great deed, to be an apostle of beauty, to deliver a message to mankind, which he was specially born to proclaim ; and, by degrees, he will find that men in these days are heroes little to his mind, fighting not in any great cause but for their own existence, and made by the struggle crafty and unkind. And he will discover that he himself is, neither hero nor apostle any longer, when there is no demand for heroism, and but a weary audience for his teaching. Then, robbed of his sentiment, he will begin to live, and that part of him which is man will appear, and may produce some useful work of the commonplace kind. But, in the mean time, he will perceive that the complexion he cherished is fading ; and we shall have spirit-groanings, and some temporary ostrich-blindness, and desperate application of quack lotions, and a belief that, with his own fading, the freshness of the whole universe is departing also. But Stafford's

world is a different one. He believes more in himself and less in mankind. He trusts so well in his God, that he accepts evil as not unsatisfactory. Evil is for him a special preserve; a divinely maintained jungle, wherein the armed elect prove their strength and courage, and the unarmed are devoured; the hunting ground of the philanthropist; the wind which howls comfortably in the chimney of the Christian, well housed after honest toil. He, too, has a mission, and a complexion; he will be an educator of the people, a builder of public baths, until he finds that their knowledge is but ignorance raised to the second power, and that the possessors of it claim as a right a share of the riches he plays patron with, and still pass unwashed before his baths. Then he will remember the doctrine of original sin, and become the Tory member for a division of his county, and a pleasant fountain of revenue to the church of his fathers.

Yet these two are my friends, whom I care more for than all others; worthier, too, than I, for they are earnest in their blindness, and I am ignoble though I see—a mere idler in the highway amused by the procession passing. Yet I, too, must set my face earnestly to shape some course of action, and look steadily at truth, stripping it of its garb of respectability, its Lord Mayor's livery of custom. There is still, even in me, much sentiment to eliminate. The influence of this quiet evening, the sound of the music beguiles

my reason ; the watch-dog is fed and slumbers. It is pleasanter to fancy we are in Wonderland, and laugh and weep with the actors, than to watch the devices of the crafty old scene-shifter Time ; pleasanter to believe the part we are playing ourselves a first rehearsal permitting mistakes, rather than a last performance. It is when we are comfortable we feel thus ; for says the rhyme—

“ With oil to make his countenance to shine,
And, for his stomach’s sake, a little wine,
A mortal sees the world become divine.”

And again there is love. It is pleasant to believe in the tried friend, to dream of the unknown maiden, ethereal, who is somewhere waiting, born into the world expressly to minister to you ; but this, alas, is a dream which always ends in dull awakening, sharp nightmare or stupid sleep, for again says the rhyme—

“ Young lovers’ flowers, kept when they are dead,
Cherished, wept over, when long witherèd,
How seldom ! Other flowers are plucked instead !

“ Smiles that are sweetest, when but one is nigh ;
Love which through weal and woe can never die ;
How seldom ! Sweetly smiles Inconstancy !

“ Although the memory of an old caress,
A faded flower, one moment may distress ;
While the gods chuckle at our faithlessness.”

Happily, I expect little from the world, so I can enjoy what I find ; and I can set about some plain

work, without either feeling uncharitable to my neighbours or regarding them with uncomfortable admiration. And I have also sufficient philosophy never to be surprised at anything ; if I finally developed into an angel, I should regard it as nothing more extraordinary than my present condition.

FLORA.

O lovely rose !

Thy crimson clear against the twilight sky,
So small, with all the infinite beyond ;
O little finite thing that soon will die,
Thou art connected by some unknown bond
With joy, and grief, and our humanity.

Small flower amid the innumerable worlds ;
Frail blossom in a universe unknown,
Deep truths beyond thyself in thee are shown,
As we have heard a life's epitome,
Gathered at times in some one single tone
Of music, such as now is in our ears,
Or of far bells across the waters blown.

O lovely rose !

The winds are restless, restless is the sea,
The course of life in turbulent channels runs ;
The worlds cease not to roll about their suns ;
But, amid all life's mutability,
There looketh, like an angel out of thee,
The very soul of perfected repose !

SCENE II.—*The same night, late. A wooded valley
near the sea.*

PILGRIM.

A pause has fallen on life : this night reveals
No record of the story of the world,
And brings no tidings of humanity.
The limitless calm spaces of the sky
Blossom in moonlight and the light of stars,
And shadowy lands move through the solitude
Of cloudy pathways in the silver waste.
The woods are dark, and in the trees the wind
Is stirring, and a nightingale doth sing ;
But all the eager-hearted world of men
Grows like a dream of something long ago.

Ah, the great world ! however far it seems,
We cannot long reject its influence ;
We cannot long forget our brotherhood.
For, as we listen, even in the wind
And in the singing of the nightingale
Are voices breathing our humanity.
And those sweet thoughtless notes of a poor bird
Throb with the pulses of undying love,
And fall upon the sorrow of the winds
Like moonlight on the waters of the sea ;
And these sad voices they have treasured up

From all the past, the memories of old,
The ages' mournfulness, the grand regret,
Are flooded through with tender promises.
Oh, it is time for us to choose our way !
Of late the meaning and intent of life,
The wonder and the beauty and the love,
Have taken hold of us ; and high resolves
And steadfast purposes, long undefined,
Have gathered in our souls and shaped themselves.
My brothers ! O my brothers ! from this night
Life becomes earnest, and our destinies
A grand and solemn thing ; and all the world
We looked on is transfigured in our sight,
And every path we tread is holy ground ;
To-night a new life must begin for us,
And there must be a bond between us three.

THE OTHERS.

Ay ! let there be a bond between us three.

STAFFORD.

We have been thinking of the days of old ;
We have been listening to the songs of time ;
And we have been beguiled with summer dreams.
Now we have heard a battle-cry afar ;
Now we have looked on watch-fires glimmering ;
Now we must rise and quit ourselves as men ;

Now we are filled with joy, for we have learned
Tidings of our great heritage—the right
To fight on God's side, seeking no reward.

GREY.

To fight on God's side! Whither shall we turn?
No longer the world follows him whose life
Aims at some great ideal. What remains,
However noble, but 'tis held the child
Of pride, self-interest, or hypocrisy.
What is there left to fight for or revere?
What common faith to knit our brotherhood?
What mystery, what wonder upon earth?
We know our little earth and all its lands;
We know our little hearts and their desires;
What good thing is, then, left for us to seek?

PILGRIM.

Once, in the misty morning of the world,
Men seemed as giants. In the days of old
Men knew not the world's limit, and might gaze
Westward, across the never-ventured seas,
Dreaming of isles afar, and golden strands
Which we have long since lost. The broad light now
Shows men but men, but still with hearts unplumbed.
The mystery born of ignorance is changed
To mystery born of knowledge; and we turn

Our eyes beyond the earth, and find new fields
Of wonder crowning wonder in the depths
And starry spaces of the universe.
The good thing fails not—it is man who fails.
And every old age brought the new regret,
And every new age brings old promises.
It is an easier thing to sit in the sun,
And take the certainty of noonday calms,
Than bear the burden on the unknown way,
Seeking a far-off good, a goal remote.
But, soon or late, the burden one throws down
Another has to bear beside his own ;
So also, soon or late, the good prevails,
Enduring, even though it seemed as lost
As sunlight, which for ages was unseen,
Buried beneath the earth, may shine again
On happy faces, from the winter hearth.

STAFFORD.

The world is wrong. Its labours are misspent ;
Its energies are lost. In no grand cause
The lives of men wear out. The work is done,
Not for its own sake, but the price it brings :—
And yet the price it brings is also small.
What help in the great commonwealth of life
Is gathered riches ? and of what avail
Pleasure and vacuous praises of the world ?
Age after age, the mighty multitude

Of men have come and gone upon the earth,
Making these things their aim ; and what remains,
What great thing speaks of them ? Their names are
lost ;

The record that they toiled, and strove, and failed,
Are but as sea-shells on the mountain-top,
Which show where once a mighty ocean rolled.
Save only with the poor, who have no choice,
Man giveth not his energies for bread,
And the mere right to live. Nay, half his life,
Half his best powers, are given when this is won,
In getting what he needs not—sumptuous fare,
Soft raiment, and the welcome of a class,
The foolish welcome, which is given to show,
And not to honour. So that men will strive
And cheat each other, that their friends may taste
Fruit in its undue season ; while the poor
Scarce find a place on earth to lay their heads.
Ay, only those who have renounced the world
Have overcome the world and helped mankind !
And so our lot is cast ; for we have heard
Tidings of labour waiting to be done.
Like tillers of the soil must we go forth,
With our own lives to sow the fields of Time ;
Not, as the hired servant, for the pay
His day's work brings, but waiting our reward
As sharers of the far-off harvesting,
As freemen in the commonwealth of life,

Who have a stake in it, an interest
In all the future of God's universe ;
For he who will not sacrifice his life,
Bury it as a seed, but rather seeks
To taste its sweetness, having now the fruit,
May find the life beyond a barren field.

GREY.

Amid uncertain voices, in an age
Against itself divided, there remains
Bread to be won, and knowledge to be sought—
A soul, a world within us to be formed,
A universe around us to explore.
Therefore, must life be still a serious thing
For one of little faith in human creeds ;
For, as the surging waters of a stream
Strike on a dam, and trickle feebly through,
So strike the waves of universal truth
Upon men's souls, and trickle out in creeds.
I have not much to give unto the world,
But there is much that I can learn in it.
Therefore, as bread must first be won, I choose
The work of teaching ; but, for my life's aim,
The work of learning and the search for Truth.
Whether I gather flowers or bitter herbs,
Whether it leads to paths of light or night,
Yet truth for its own sake, which cannot fail.

So, if we find a life beyond the earth,
Where nothing false can dwell, we shall not there
Be naked cast, like shipwrecked mariners,
Nor stand as strangers on an alien shore.

PILGRIM.

As ships, which pass each other on the sea
On different tacks, might to a careless eye
Seem seeking different goals, yet steadfastly
Are beating up toward one distant port,
And fighting the same head-wind,—so we pass
By different ways in search of one great end.
One purpose shall unite our lives henceforth,
Though we find different labours into which
To throw our lives. I find that work in art—
Each smile on a fair face, each flower that fades,
Is worth the keeping if we knew but how ;
And every life has something of its own,
Gleans some new truth, finds something beautiful,
Worth giving to the world. So never yet
Grew sweeter in my soul the song of life,
Or holier its music, but there came
Desire to treasure something of the joy,
And keep for ever something of that song.
Therefore my work lies here ; and if at last
I show the world a beauty in its midst
Which was forgotten, or a touch of love
Unnoticed, then I have my great reward.

STAFFORD.

Your work is found. What nobler, if you make
Your soul a harp æolian, by whose strings
The common wind of the world is made a song ?
Far other is the work I have to give.
God's world is full of sad hearts needing cheer,
Of feet aweary with the weary road,
Of little children who forgot to smile,
Of wrongs that must be righted for the weak,
Injustice and oppression to the poor.
While one man lives in idleness and sin,
And one man hath not where to lay his head ;
While there are cities filled with palaces,
And haunts hard by them, where the river of life
Is like a stagnant drain, I cannot rest :
The song of life becomes a battle-cry,
And, before God, I swear to stand for the poor !
Therefore I hold the wealth which men call mine,
But which I never earned, no longer mine.
And I will leave it, go into the world
A poor man with the poorest, earn my bread
Among the poorest, bear with them their wrong,
And win their love, until I find at last
The truest way to serve them.

PILGRIM.

Bravely and well you choose.



STAFFORD.

So let there be a bond between us now—
Before we go.

PILGRIM.

This, then, shall be our bond :
To live in earnest ; make our purposes
True to the great ideal we have seen ;
To work for the work's sake, and not its price ;
And take no thought of pleasure, or of ease,
No thought of maiden's smiles, nor wedding wives,
Till we have proved ourselves, and won our spurs.
I swear, then, by our friendship, to be true
And keep the bond !

GREY.

Well—I will join you.

STAFFORD.

I swear it, before God, for it is well ! [*A silence.*]

PILGRIM.

And so our bond is made, our purpose fixed,
Our pilgrimage begun. The time has come
To say farewell. You seek the mighty world—
I follow afterwards. And two years hence

Here we shall meet, and rest upon the way,
And find a pause in life, and think it o'er ;
Strengthen each other's hands, and knit old ties
Of friendship closer. We shall not forget
This solemn night—the dark and silent woods,
And over them the moonlight on the sea ;
The sorrow of the wind among the trees ;
The silver singing of the nightingale ;
And, far away, the companies of stars
Set in the sacred spaces of the sky ;—
The night whereon the wonder of all life
Fell on our souls, and we beheld and loved,
And sware allegiance to the Unknown God.

STAFFORD.

See the faint glimmer of light beyond the hills ;
The summer night is melting into morn.
Come, let us go !

SCENE III.—FLORA *in the garden. A summer day.*

FLORA.

The first place I can remember
Is this dear old garden of ours,
The sundial where the pathway meet,
The borders of half-wild flowers ;

The four grey walls around it,
The lavender hedge and the trees,
The sunshine and smell of the summer,
The sound of the humming of bees.

The trees are all in blossom again
In the little grove outside ;
The branches of a laburnum
Half of a hawthorn's hide ;
There's crimson and snow-white hawthorn,
And a copper beech between,
And the clusters of lilac blossom
Are mixed with an evergreen.

Everything is so lovable,
And life so kind and true ;
I am sure that I love everything
That ever I saw or knew.
And in human hearts, and in flower and field,
All over the world, you read
Wherever you come, a welcome,
And wherever you go, " God speed."

How long will they last, I wonder—
These dear old days at home ?
And what will happen to all of us
When a few more years have come ?

Will some one come a-courting,
And many a sweet thing say,
And take me into strange new home
Ever so far away ?

But whatever the future brings me,
And whatever home I find,
There'll be never a place in the world so good
As the old home left behind ;
Nowhere flowers that smell so sweet,
Or faces that look so kind.

How pleasant it is the evening,
As we go through the village street,
The welcome looks and greetings
In the faces of all we meet ;
From the fisherman coming homeward
After a week away,
From the old dame at her spinning,
And the children at their play.

For we always go out in the evening,
And wander along the shore,
When all is still but the song of the sea
Or the sound of the splash of an oar,
And away in the far horizon
The skies on the waters rest :
There's nothing but ocean between our coast
And the New World out in the west.

And the old men by the little quay
Are walking to and fro ;
Ten paces only and they turn,
With measured step and slow,
In the way they learned to walk the decks
At sea, long years ago.

And we watch the distant vessels,
And wonder whither they're bound—
To the isles of the west, or Indian seas,
Or maybe the whole world round.
They seem so lonesome, there by themselves,
Sailing into the night ;
And we wonder what's taking place on board,
And whether their hearts are light ;
If some who are seeking a new far home
Are thinking of old farewells,
While the merry-hearted captain
A good sea story tells.

We stay out nearly always
As long as the light remains,
And come round home in the twilight
Through the quiet country lanes ;
When the world has grown so silent,
And the skies become so deep,
And we see the meadows dimly
And the cattle half asleep ;

Which stand serene as heroes of the past
Communing after the battles fought and won ;
And, to the southward, is a purple glen
In which our river, like a streak of sky,
Seems sleeping, for you cannot see it move
Until it winds close here around our rocks,—
And then you hear it, David, for yourself.
And then there is our own grey ruined tower,
The ivy which you touch, the little wild flowers,
Golden, and blue, and white, among the stones.
Ah, colour means not anything to you !
But listen to a dream which I have dreamed,
And it may help to make the darkness less
Which shuts from you the glory I behold.

It seemed that after many days we heard
Whate'er we look upon, and all good things
Became a music to reveal themselves.
The trees, with something of the weaker voice
We hear from them when winds are in the boughs,
Found utterance in song : in spring each bud
Burst into leafage with a different tone ;
And, in the summer, dreamy symphonies
Told of the sunlight quivering in their shade ;
And autumn smote them with a battle song,
Or touched them gently, and their leaves fell down,
Raining a sorrowful music on the earth.
The waterfall would pour through lonely glens

A visible music ; and the running streams
Bore down clear treble to the ocean's bass.
The sea itself was as an instrument,
Whose waves were notes, o'er which the golden sun,
Or storm clouds swept, like hands, and drew from it,
From shore to shore, slow rippling cadences,
Or anthems terrible to hear.

Far off,
Hid in the woods, upon their peaceful banks,
The wild flowers had a music of their own ;
So faint, a footfall would have stifled it,
As would a foot have crushed them. So a maid
Might lay her ear against a violet bed,
And hear a song so gentle and so pure,
Her tears must fall on them for very love.
Melodious snows and rains were on the earth.
From out the moving clouds broke harmony ;
And when at sundown they were ranged in the west,
From every hue came forth a different chord,
And, as their colours blended, chorus rang
As from the mingled voices of a world.
And to each song among them all it seemed
The ear might listen, singly, of the rest
Unconscious, as the eye may choose its goal.
But night and darkness laid upon the earth
A silence, a deep stillness, which became
A music in itself. Yet afterward,
Through the deep hush, behind the hills afar,

Arose the moon ; and as among the clouds
She made a silver path, a silver song,
Soft and mysterious, fell upon the earth,
And flooded all the quiet of the skies.
And sweet it was to hear that silver song,
And fall asleep beneath old trees, and dream
The song again in sleep, and wake at last
And find the music and the moon were gone,
And silence deep once more among the worlds.

DAVID.

I am glad ; for I have seen with thine eyes, my mistress : thou has shown me what I never before was shown. The glory of the earth remains ; but the glory of man's life is departed. The flowers which thou didst speak of—yet, once more, tell me what may the flowers be most like !

EILEEN.

Like messages the sweetest voice could bring
From some one you have loved, but never seen ;
Like the good thoughts you cannot put in words ;
Like the mysterious meaning of great things,
Told in the music of some simple story,
To those who could not else have understood.
Where there are flowers, God is not far away.

DAVID.

Ay, such, my sweet mistress, art thou. Like one of the flowers growing among the stones of the old tower. Such art thou, O flower of maidens, in a ruined world ; meet to be the love of a hero of old. Nay, my child, we live in a dying world. I, even I, remember a time better than this, when there were merry voices about these walls, and thy father was a child here. And there was the sound of the huntsman's horn in the morning, and the last of the old clans was not dispersed. And now they are gone ; the master also is dead ; and here thou dwellest lonely, with hardly a companion for thy youth.

EILEEN.

Ah, yes ! 'tis sometimes very lonely now,
Now there is no one left at home but me,
And mother's smile has grown so very sad.
If only Alec could be here again—
My dear, dear, merry brother, whom I love
So very well—how different 'twould be !
How we would visit all our favourite haunts,
Go off together fishing up the stream,
Or ride across the country, as of old,
To see our distant friends ! When he was here
All things looked happy, even to the dogs,
Who knew his voice so well. Three years have gone

Since last we saw him. He was then a boy ;
Is now a man, a soldier—oh, not changed !
Not changed, I hope ! And, next year, he will
come—

Unless the rumour which we hear of war
Should make a difference. God grant us peace,
And give us soon our brother back again.
Ay, it is sometimes very lonely now,
In the long evenings of the silent house ;
And sometimes a great wish comes over me
To see great cities and their multitudes,
And look upon their wonder, and their work,
And feel the cheer of numbers.

DAVID.

Thou, only thou, art left, and by-and-by they will
come and take thee, too, to be swallowed up in the
town.

EILEEN.

And is the town so bad as you believe ?
It seems that it should be the happiest place.
So many more would there be found to love ;
And all should work together with such cheer,
Seeing each other work ; and there are stored
Wonders of art and treasures of the past,
Which nowhere else are found.

DAVID.

Once, in other years, long years ago, my way was through a city. And there I heard a harsh and mingled din, a crushing together of many men who were strangers. I heard not sound of mirth, nor song, nor word of love ; but greeting wherein was no fellowship, the cry of the seller in the street, and the sound of wheels upon the stones. And the air was heavy to breathe, and it seemed there was no sky above, and no rest around me ; but evermore the sound of wheels, and hurrying feet upon the stones. I know no more of the town than this,—never since have I entered one,—but I bore away in my brain the burden of the sound of its folly, and its strife, and of hurrying feet upon the stones.

O lead me down, my mistress, it grows dark ! My eyes can feel the darkness, and my love for thee has made me sad.

[She goes down with him, and returns.]

EILEEN.

Nothing in life
Bids us good-bye,
But to leave gifts.
When the trees die
Sky fills the rifts ;

Something instead
Always we find it,
Daylight is dead,
Starlight behind it.

Death takes away
One whom we seek ;
Hope from beyond comes.
Sight has grown weak,
Trust, the sweet bond, comes.
Danger has grown,
Courage to face it ;
Wealth may have flown,
Love, to replace it,
Love, the more fond comes.

All the sounds of day are dumb,
Twilight voices wake, and some
Linger with the stars to come.

Who the voices' change can hear ?
Who can watch a star appear ?
But we turn, and they are here.

Westward still a glow of pink ;
In the heart sweet thoughts that link,
Past and future, as we think.

Lonelier grow the lonely hills,
Through the world the silence thrills,
And the sky with starlight fills ;

And some voice, some far-off tone,
Half expected, but unknown,
Night has brought, and made our own.

O come, my love, you have not found me yet !
You know not I am waiting, or forget
That I am yours, although we have not met,
And keep our promised tryst.

But we must meet at last, and love, we two ;
And I am waiting to be found by you.
Oh, has the way been hard to battle through,
Or was it somewhere missed ?

We are God's thoughts : the same thought which
creates
The man, conceives the maid who somewhere waits ;
The two as one complete, He contemplates,
Who now apart exist.

Somewhere, it may be amid strife and sin,
Unconsciously my love may enter in.
And keep your heart, and make you strong to win,
And stalwart to resist.

Or, if the shadows round your life grow deep,
Into your weary heart my love may creep,
And in the sweet forgetfulness of sleep,
Bring you a dream of rest.

SCENE V.—*At the same hour, in different places.*

PILGRIM, STAFFORD, and GREY.

Ruins of an Abbey Chapel. PILGRIM *alone.*

PILGRIM.

A few stones piled together long ago,
Half fallen again to ruins, have a charm
To hallow all the world. The sweetest sounds
Are those most near akin to silences,
Such as sea whispers rippling at the prow
When the loud engine ceases ; muffled bells,
Or echoes of a far-off wave of song
In mellow minsters ; and the sweetest thoughts
Are those far whispers of humanity,
And love and death, which none can ever hear
Amid the mighty voices of the world.
This is a little spot of neutral ground
Between the world we know and that we dream ;
The summer wind, which blows outside and bends
The flowers that grow upon the highest walls,
Sounds far away ; the sunbeams falling here
Look other than the common light which floods

The fields of corn outside ; and, overhead,
The roof of pure blue sky is all its own.
The story which is written here to-day
Is not of scenes in old long gathered hours ;
Another meaning, and another life,
Which holds that past within it, as a tree
Holds vanished sunlight, has succeeded now.
For though, erewhile, I fell into a dream
Of summer, on a morning long ago,
Saw the fair ladies of the castle cross
The sward of green, and climb the winding stair,
And enter at the doorway one by one ;
Though I became awhile as one of them,
Knelt there at matins, watched the sunlight fall
Through windows darkened by old ivy now ;
I looked for something which I could not find.
There was a want of something I had known,
An emptiness at heart, as though all life
Had dwindled in its grand significance.
And soon the sound of the Gregorian
Grew ghostly in mine ears ; the simpler faith
My heart had gathered in that early world
Was troubled ; and, behold, the music ceased,
The people passed away, and all the walls
Were ruined, and the clear blue summer sky
Became a roof above the grassy nave.
But lo, the wind, which was the same soft wind
That blew about the castle walls of old,

Had gathered from the ages a new voice;
And held the soul of a great yearning world !
The skies were deeper, and the flowers looked love,
Such as they could not look in those young days,
Although they were the same ; and in my soul
Beat the strong pulse of life, of larger hopes,
Of grander sorrows, and sublimer wrongs,
Of nobler labour, and more sacred love,
Which the great world has won upon its way,
And learned from century to century.

Yet all afar away and mystical—
For here the voices of the great world, met
By dreams of the eternal and unknown,
Grow calm, and like as whispers in my ears ;
As sea tides slowly flowing up the stream,
Meet the strong rapids, breaking among rocks,
And lull their tumult to a rippled song.

[He goes outside.]

I dream ! I know not the great world of men.
I have not proved my hope. The true ideal
For any age is one with strength to stand
Exposure to that age ; no hothouse plant
To grow in shelter, but a tree to brave
The winter frost, and strengthen in the storm.
Reverberating laughter of the fool
Can shake a false ideal from its height,
As the blank cartridge from the gun at sea

Levels the heaven-soaring waterspout.
It is not the great evils, the foul wrongs,
The battle dangers, not the difficult road,
Which make us weak ; nay, but the commonplace,
The dull, monotonous changeless mile on mile,
With progress hardly marked. It is not hate,
But laughter makes us shrink before ourselves,
The common wisdom of the world which cramps
And lowers our ideal ; and the heart
Hath also its own devils to cast out.
Have I not heard them laughing, " See this prig,
Who thinks to help the world, and show mankind
The beauty it forgets ; whose youth will pass
Unproven in the world ; whose thoughts are buds
Unduly fostered in a sheltered spring,
For blighting of the east wind afterwards ;
Who leaves the lesson of the times unlearned,
While slowly toiling on to fit himself
Some work of art to fashion, in the end
Bought by the cotton-spinner, whom he scorns,
Yet who has given, in his own life's work,
Bread to five hundred homes." Or haply this,
" They swore to take no thought of maiden's smiles
Or wedding wives, and such like. Noble youths !
Who stand on monuments, Stylites-like,
Lest they be fathers unawares. Behold !
They miss all good whereunto they were born ;
They sacrifice their heritage, to write

Their names in chalk upon the outer walls."
Or else, "They think to leave the common path,
The dusty highway; and how like they look
To little schoolboys, who go trespassing
And breaking fences, getting as reward
A flogging from their schoolmaster, the world."
Though we fly not from hell's artillery,
'Tis hard to combat the world's rotten eggs;
Yet we must suffer if we seek to lead,
And learn the world's heart ere we win its ear.

*London. A crowded street. A regiment has just
passed.*

GREY.

'Tis a poor world, a bad mismanaged world,
A very feeble, yet most humorous world—
Man in the foreground, playing the buffoon;
Satan behind him, grinning; and around,
The empty theatre of vacant space.
Here are brave fools departing for the war,
To fight for payment, and the crowds look on
And cheer them, and the stagnant city blood
Glow for a moment, though they know not why,—
No wrongs of theirs are now to be avenged.
And now, the sudden brightness passed away,
The old routine goes on, the crowd breaks up;
Each to his little patch of mud returns,

The strong to fatten and the weak to die,
And God beholds, and sees that it is good !

The spider kills the fly. The wiser sphex
Stings the poor spider in the centre nerve,
Which paralyses only ; lays her eggs,
And buries with them, with a loving care,
The spider, powerless but still alive,
To warm them into life, and afterward
To serve as food among the little ones.
This is the lesson nature has to teach :
“ Woe to the conquered, victory to the strong.”
And so through all the ages, step by step,
The stronger and the craftier replaced
The weaker, and increased and multiplied ;
And in the end the outcome of the strife
Was man, who had dominion over all,
And preyed on all things, and the stronger man
Trampled his weaker brother under foot ;
And God beheld, and saw that it was good !

Another part of London. A funeral has just passed.

STAFFORD.

I saw a hearse in the street
Go by through the din with the dead—
A ghastly, crawling hearse.

A girl stood by it as it passed :
" I knew him well," she said ;
And laughed, and uttered a curse.

On her own way went the girl ;
To the grave with the dead went the hearse ;
And on rolled the world on its way
Through the homeless universe !

Fair girls out in the garden,
Gentle, and true, and kind,
With beautiful prospects before you,
And sweet recollections behind,
Your hearts, the pure cloisters of beauty,
Which love could not elsewhere find !

O beautiful, sweet-hearted maidens,
That only your power you knew !
Your only sin is in doing not,—
In nothing you ever can do ;
For I think of your sad, sad sisters,
Though silent appealing to you.

SCENE VI.—*London. An attic. Evening.*

NELLY (*sewing at the window*).

Oh, I am tired ! tired out
Work, work ; no change or hope ; Dick dying there.

Poor Dick ! Our Dick !
And father drinking. Oh, how wearily,
How slowly, darkness deepens in the room ;
How wearily the sun has shone all day
Upon the roofs ; and now the night has come
And brought no rest or calm. How drearily
The noises of the street continue still ;
How wearily the world is turning round ;
How weary God must be of watching it.

DICK (*arousing*).

"Oh, Catseyes, I've had such an 'orrid dream. Methought !" — Ah, lady, art thou still at thy task ? I've been wondering what they'll call me at the Music Hall next winter. The "Infant Violinist" last year, and the "Prodigy" the year before. If I could get taken on at one of the pantomimes, it would be a grand thing. I wish I had my fiddle back ; it's a month since we pawned it. Madam, I fear Fortune hath not smiled on us of late ! Our sire inebriate, ourself indisposed, and you, Madam — Eh, Nelly, don't cry, dear. Haven't you finished your work yet ? You must be very tired.

NELLY.

I've finished now. No, Dick, I'm not tired ; but I was thinking it was so hard to see you lying there and

not getting any better, not able to get a day or two in the country or anything to set you up.

DICK.

Well, perhaps there's a good time coming ; and we may get a day or two in the country or a trip down the river before long—who knows ? Tell me what the country's like, Nelly—not much like the scenes at the theatre, I expect.

“ Carpenter, is this river fordable ? ”
“ Ducks and geese they do swim over.”

That was a pretty scene. But tell me about it, Nelly.

NELLY.

Well, Dick, there's no noise there. Everything has a sound like music, and you can see far away for miles and miles all open and grand, and the sky is wide and free everywhere over you, except when you are under the trees. And you hear the birds singing, Dick ; and the brooks in the fields, and the wind in the trees, and the grass, they sing too ; and yet all seems quiet and still. And you hardly ever see any people—just a few—ploughing the fields, or hay-making, or minding the cows and sheep, or driving waggons ; and they all look pleasant and kind, and walk slowly. And everything looks clean and fresh

and green. And the air's so fresh it makes you merry to breathe and do nothing else. Then, there are no lamps, and at night it's quite dark, and so quiet it seems as if the world was dead.

DICK.

Ah, yes, I can fancy it : the sky all round you, and the birds singing, and the brooks going nobody knows where, and the boys minding the cows. It's next best to being there to hear about it.

NELLY.

I wish I could tell you more about it, dear ; but you know I've only been there a few times. I almost thought we were there together now, and forgot this place, and that I have to take home my work. Oh, Dick, how I hate it, and the rich people it's for ! I hate everybody but you.

DICK.

What wonder ? What has any one ever done for you but get all the work they can out of you for nothing, the mean devils. Hate 'em, Nelly ! let's hate 'em !

NELLY.

No, no ! That's wrong, Dick, I suppose ; anyway, it

won't help us. I must go now and take these things home. I won't be longer than I can help. [*She goes.*]

DICK.

And you can see for miles and miles ; everywhere grass, and flowers, and trees, and sky. And you go on, and are always coming to something new. And there are cows and horses running about wild. And all the people look kind ; and at night it's dark and quiet, and the stars——

Enter SMUDGE and DUST.

(*In a tragic voice*). Ah, Aha ! “Be thou spirit of health or goblin damned !” Nay, the darkness hid thee. I perceive it is none other than our good friend Smudge.

SMUDGE.

Yes, mate ; me and Dust's come a-wisitn' of you. And how's yourself?

DICK.

Oh, about the same, old chap. And how's business with you?

SMUDGE.

Well, poor enough. You see, the weather's so fine ; and when there's no mud people don't think about the

sweeper. Besides, there's twice as many sweepers out in fine weather. A lot of good-for-nothing coves, as is a disgrace to the perfession, as won't come bad days comes when it's fine, and takes the bread out o' honest men's mouths. Dick, we've brought you summat. No! 'taint sassages—it's a fiddle.

DICK.

The fiddle?

SMUDGE.

. No ; a bran' new 'un in a case. I got it clever—never mind how—off the chap what got your daddy sacked from the Music Hall. Won't he be mad, too? There ain't nothing wrong about it—eh, Dick?

DICK.

Wrong? no. Serve him right, double-dyed and most atrocious villain ; but we won't tell Nelly ; she'd be vexed. How good of you, Smudge, to think of a chap ; it's just the very thing I've been wanting to make it a bit lively. Wrong? Why should it be wrong for the like of you or me to prig anything we can get hold of from those who have all they want? 'Tisn't as if they trusted us ; they're always on our track, and we have to take our chance of getting nabbed. We're like the sparrows, Smudge—we're as poor as they are, and who thinks it wrong of them to get all they can?

SMUDGE.

Well, you knows best—I never had a head like you for puttin' things clear. Hows'ever, sometimes I thinks to myself it ain't quite straight, and I says to Dust, "Look here, you and me 'll reform and be 'spectable." Ah, Dust, you're like I! you never knowed your father and mother. I were a foundling, Dust, picked up on the steps at night, and we neither of us ain't werry genteel to look at. Look at him, Dick, a-speakin' with his tail. But it's worth the risk, to hear you playin' again. Nothin' never took me like your fiddlin', Dick. I liked it the first time as I heard you, when you was the Prodigy, and I like it better when we're quiet together.

DICK (*taking the fiddle*).

"Fair—fair is my love ; fair is my love."

SMUDGE.

Ah, that song come in "Beauty and the Beast." Play us one of they old tunes you like yourself.

[DICK *plays* "*The Mermaid*," "*Home, Sweet Home*," and others.

Eh, Dick, it's grand ! it's grand ! It sets me a-thinkin' about 'em—my mother, Dick, as I ain't never seen. Your Nelly said as she was in heaven. I wonder if there'd be a chance of their wantin' a crossin'

kept nice there, or if there'd be any chance for Dust gettin' in? See him a-speakin' with his tail! "Where Smudge goes, I'll go," says he.

DICK.

Oh, they won't want any of us!

SMUDGE.

No, I suppose not. Oh, I know'd there was summat I wanted to tell you. There's such a rum cove come to live close to me. He's a real gentleman, too, I'd swear, though he do live so poor. I couldn't make out at first if he was a miser, or if the police was after him, or what, as should make him come there; but I'm certain now it ain't neither. And he speaks so nice—better'n you or your Nelly even, although you was so well brought up. And last night, as I was a-comin' in, he was standin' there outside the court smokin' his pipe, and when he sees me, he says, "Ullo!" says he; "had a good day?" "Pretty fair, sir," says I; "the business ain't what it was." "I think," says he, "as yours is a werry fine business, sweepin' away dirt so as others should go clean—there ain't a finer." "There ain't a many as thinks so, sir," says I. And then he laughs, and looks at Dust, and he axes me how I could afford a licence for him. "You needn't be afraid," says he, "to say you haven't got one; I ain't a detective." Then he axes me what

I were a-going to be when I growed up ; and I said I hadn't quite decided, but I thought of 'listing. And he said as that were a werry good thing to do, and for me to come in any time I likes into his room in the evening and talk to him. And then he tells me as he were a-startin' a night school in a fine room in the next street, and there was carpenters' benches there and other things to be learned, besides readin' and writin' ; "for," says he, "emigration's the thing for young chaps now, and I want to train up some smart lads like yourself"—meaning me, Dick—"to send out over the water to some farms as I'm a-taking." So I promised as I'd go round, and he said as how there'd be some fun there sometimes when the work was done. Oh, he's a rum 'un ; I can't make him out, or what he's a-doin' of it for ; but he's a real gentleman, and somehow the sort o' chap I shouldn't like to know as I swagged that there fiddle. Anyhow, it's done now.

DICK.

When I'm better, Smudge, I'll come round with you, if he'll let me. I shouldn't wonder if he was rather touched in the head. Coming down here for men for his farms, eh !

SMUDGE.

Oh, he ain't touched, I'll swear. There's your

daddy a-comin'. I hear him a-tumblin' upstairs.
Stow the fiddle under the bed. Me and Dust's off.
Good night, old chap.

SCENE VII.—*Christmas morning.* PILGRIM, STAFFORD, and GREY in different places.

PILGRIM (*passing through the village*).

Ah, the great want ! The want in all the world !
The Christmas bells are ringing through the world.
I hear them ringing, but I hardly hear
Their music ; nay, for I am listening
For that which they are leaving unfulfilled,
Unuttered. Ah, the want, the cannot be !
Has, then, my soul lost something, or but won
Clearer perception, that I stand aloof,
A mere spectator, looking upon scenes
Whose life was part of my life, which were me,
Before I saw myself ? Alas ! man builds
A prison-house of self about his soul,
Which narrows daily, like the torture-room
That shrank upon its victim, inch by inch.

Have I done well in making art my choice ?
Can I receive through it the lesson of life,
Work with the world, answer its weary cry
For help, or feel the spirit of my age ?
Is it not, rather, a mere looking on,

A standing in life's by-paths, calling up
The scenes of life while we might live those scenes?
To get life's lesson, is it not to move,
To work, to sin, to sorrow with the world;
To feel the storm and motion of the world,
The battlefield, while we have strength and youth?
Ah, me! what tidings of the old ideal,
Our bond at parting, work for the work's sake?
In faith to which I should, with steadfast heart,
Plod on, learn one thing while I lost my life,
Remain within the camp to bake the bread
Of those who have to fight. Good work for cripples;
But for a man who longs to prove himself
And fight among his brethren, little joy.
The good thing is not gone from the world, we said;
But, in an age like this, how slow were art,
How weak its best success, to show the world
It still abides! 'Twere but another star
Shining above the struggling multitudes,
Who never lift their eyes toward the sky;
And, before God, it is a better thing
To show the beauty of His firmament
To one whose sight is feeble, than to give
Another star to him whose sight is clear.

Ay, and the doubt! If all should be a dream,
If all man's labour perish with the earth,—
The doubt which knocks and will not be denied,—

Then art were vainest, saddest toil of all,
And beauty, the most cunning of all lies,
The traitor's smile, with which Death fools mankind,
The onions and the garlic of our bonds.
As one ashamed to doubt his friend, yet doubts,
I cannot look untroubled on the earth;
Or feel old comfort in the light of heaven,
While my heart holds this devil of distrust
In the great hope of human destiny.
I cannot doubt for long. Or love or scorn,
The grand ideal or the barren void,
Allegiance or rebellion I must choose.
Oh, when will he, whom we are waiting for
To teach this selfish and vainglorious age
That the life is more than the meat, lift up his voice?
When will he come, whose words shall make men fear
To laugh at noble things, whose life shall build,
Out of the ruins of our shaken creeds,
New hope and faith again, and forge new bonds
Of brotherhood between the high and low?
When will he come that we may follow him?
When will a leader come whom all shall know?
Alas! for the world needs another Christ.
And He who died for it——

The Christmas bells
Are ringing through the world; and ah, the want,
The bitter doubt! A joy has gone from life,
And high resolves are shaken; old ideals

Have lost a light. To fight for the good thing
I am not now less ready, but less sure
Where the good thing to fight for may be found.

*The East of London. Same time. A crowded
thoroughfare.*

STAFFORD.

Here, at the centre of the mighty world,
The throbbing heart, whose pulses ebb and flow
Along the farthest channels of man's life ;
Here, in the darkest chamber of that heart,
Breaks the last Christmas morn. How different
From that first Christmas morning long ago,
When shepherds were abiding with their flocks,
And in the east they saw the morning star
Bring in God's day !

The air is thick and chill ;
The streets are dark, high walled against the sun ;
And through them throngs the unknown multitude.
The silence of innumerable lives
Is round me ; there is sound of rushing feet,
But of the human soul no utterance,
No tidings, neither any song or cry.
Each of these lives is as an unknown world ;
We see it from afar off as a star,
Making us pictures of its seas, and woods,
And flowers, which win their colours from the sun,—

The same sun at whose touch our own unfold.
So only we may picture of these hearts
A love and purpose, shame and suffering,
And joy and evil, like unto our own.

Ah, let us watch and listen till we catch
Some tidings of our brothers ! Fast, so fast
They come, and they are gone : they are as leaves,
Stricken and shaken from the tree of life,
Swept onward by the winds of destiny.
Each seemeth as the other. Yet we watch,
Mark any single face, and it becomes
Unlike all other faces in the world ;
We know not wherein different, yet know
A story here is gathered from the years
Which nowhere else is written, and we hear
A far-off utterance, a prelude faint
Of that great song of life which God did set
In every soul ; and if we could but hear
The songs themselves, the multitude would seem
No more like leaves that eddy in the blast,
But as the morning stars which sing together,
And as the sons of God that shout for joy.

Ah, could we hear ! Hath life a song for thee,
My brother, thou poor, wretched, vanquished one,
Who crouchest in the corner ? Unto thee
What tidings doth the Christmas morning bring ?

No man doth love thee ; yet I saw a dog
Come up and lick thy hand, and thou didst smile.

And thou, O vacuous, O pale of face,
After thy night of sin, where is thy song ?
What tidings hath the Christmas morn for thee ?
Yet, with the bells' first peal there came a change,
A sadness to thine eyes, which haply told
Of Christmas and thy childhood long ago.

And thou, poor little one, thy childish face
Full of the cunning of the street, thy lips
Eager with oaths, alas ! my little one,
Is the song crushed already from thy soul ?
What is thy Christmas morn, and where thy smile ?

Oh, hell's artillery is deadliest
Where men are massed ! Oh, give us room to fight !
Away ! The time is come to seek new fields.
This is our surest hope ; to lead our band,
The little band which we have gathered here,
Forth to the unknown, unclaimed lands o' the earth,
Which wait our coming ; to return again
And send forth others to our pioneers ;
And when the way is open they will go
In thousands—those for whom is here no space—
And make themselves a home, and owe no man
For anything, but claim as right of birth

Their hearth, freehold, from God. Ay, it is time
To leave the old deceitful market-place
We call the world ! ay, we will lead them forth,
Strong men, whose strength drops down for lack of
work,
And little children who are never young,
As pioneers into the waiting land.

Ah, my sweet love ! my purpose would have failed,
And I had grown weary but for you.
And yet you know it not, O sweetheart mine !
As every flower has its atmosphere
By which alone its colour is perceived,
The flower of existence, which is love,
Were colourless to me wer't not for you.

The same time. Another part of London.

GREY.

I hear the devil laughing in those bells :
"Peace upon earth, goodwill to men," laughs he.
And all the faces in this multitude
Are as of men on whom hath fallen a doom,
Rather than those to whom glad tidings come.
For, lo, there is no peace upon the earth !
And suffering, and toil for daily bread,
Distrust, and greed, have trampled out goodwill.
And, as the music of these Christmas bells

Has lost its old significance for man,
So from the music of our life the years
Steal the first promise. Tidings of great joy
Was once the burden, and we listen still,
Hearing the same old changes of the chime
Mocking us with the promise unfulfilled.
We spend a few years toiling against stream,
Lose strength, or weary of unequal strife,
And drift back with the tide. What profits it
That one ascends toward the fount of life
A little further than the many men ?
The fount he cannot reach ; and, soon or late,
He too must drift back to the unknown sea.
Were it not better, then, to take the good—
The little good we find—and cease the strife
And longing for the better which is not ?
The stair man thinks he doth ascend toward heaven
Is but the treadmill in his prison house !

What of the bond we made, and our ideal ?
What of the others, and the work they choose ?
Herbert, good steadfast Herbert, will not turn.
Duty to him is easy and defined ;
His path through life is like a turnpike road
With walls on either side, and little fear
Of treading dangerous ground, or seeing sights
To make him pause thereon. So, like a horse
With blinkers on, he plods his useful way,

And is not likely to take fright at stones,
Or fancy they are devils. Pilgrim's path
Is on the mountains, and by crag and stream,
In twilight lands unreal ; and I must tread
The world's great wilderness, which lieth bare
With scarce a flower which has faded not
Under the blazing noonday light of truth.
Ay, and our bond ! I have been false to it.
Herbert would scorn me, if he did but know
I played at love with one I would not wed,
And called it friendship. Ay ! he would be right ;
And I but tempt temptation, not in strength,
But weakness. Yet so beautiful a girl.
Why not a thing to study and to love,
Like flower, or stream, or aught that's beautiful ?
And, after all, in what have I done wrong ?
To kiss a pretty maiden, be her friend,
Let the mock virtuous hold a sin, not I.
My conscience is becoming over nice,
Or over bold, to task me in this wise :
And conscience is like fire, a noble servant,
But a vile master. I will look to it.
And yet——

 This conscience shall not taunt me
With trifles, or beneath it life will seem
One sin. If it continues to give pain
It shows there's rottenness, an evil thing
To cast away even as a worthless tooth.

SCENE VIII.—*Christmas Eve. The attic. DICK in bed, dying.*

NELLY.

Stir up the fire, Smudge ; it's getting dark.

DICK.

Firelight's good. The old room looks nicer, and we all seem nearer together. It feels nice to be near at the end—only one more Christmas Day together——

SMUDGE.

Many on 'em, Dick, so help me ! Well, Dust and me's comin' to dinner to-morrow, if your old dad ain't fractious. Duff, eh ?

DICK.

Good friends, ain't we, Smudge ? You know I'm dying now—don't you ?

SMUDGE.

Never such friends afore, old chap.

DICK.

If I'd got better they'd have made me Whittington's Cat this year. It's hard to think to-morrow's the last

Christmas Day together. I've been so long dying, too, and I've been such a trouble and no use. You'll excuse my being so long in going, Nelly.

NELLY.

Oh, Dick ! our Dick ! What, Dick, unkind ?

[He takes her hand.]

DICK.

It's getting dark. *[After a time—wandering.]*

You know me, daddy ? What a day we'll have !—

“ I sigh beneath thy casement, lady fair.”

“ Could I but tell thee ! ”—Ah yes, I forgot.

And so you're coming with me, all of you,

Part of the way ?—That's what I always said.—

We're getting to the country.—Smudge, that's you :

Give us your hand ; and Dust, Dust, good old dog.—

The sunshine, the warm sunshine everywhere,

The flowers, and the sky, and in the trees

The wind is singing songs.—

“ O Catseyes, Catseyes, wherefore art thou Catseyes ? ”—

“ The Infant Prodigy !—Encore ! ”—Ah no,

You are not going back into the town ;

The flowers are waiting for us, and the wind—

The wind is singing songs among the trees.

A little further.—I must go—I wish—

[Bells ring out]

Listen ! the bells are ringing. [*He becomes conscious.*

Oh, Nelly dear, I dreamt—— How dark it is,
and I am dying now. I wish father would come.
I have something to ask him. I wish——

NELLY (*kissing him*).

He'll soon be here, my darling !

DICK.

In case—in case I shouldn't see you any more,
let's say good-bye, Smudge,—and if you don't mind
kissing me. Good-bye, Smudge, for a long time ; and
good-bye, Dust, for ever.

[*Dust wags his tail.*

What larks we've had, old fellow ! [*He dozes.*

SMUDGE (*inarticulately*).

Our Dick ! our Dick ! [*Rushes out, followed by DUST.*

*An hour later. DICK in NELLY'S arms dead. Their
FATHER comes in noisily, singing a verse of a
drinking-song.*

NELLY.

Hush, father ! for God's sake, hush !

HER FATHER.

All right, girl. Get a light. Christmas comes but

once a year. Dick awake? Merry Christmas, Dick. Shake hands, old man. He *is* asleep. He's not——

O God ! our Dick !

SCENE IX.—*Winter afternoon.* PILGRIM *alone in his room.*

PILGRIM.

The darkness comes ; another day is dead.
O Death ! O Time ! Inexorable Time !
Thou givest us no halt upon the way,
Nor any promise for the journey's end ;
No turning back, no refuge from the sea.
On every side this land of solemn shores
Moans with sad music of the waves of death :
I seem to see the peoples of all time
Journeying over it from sea to sea,
Dipt in the sunlight for a little while,
Then hidden in the waters, lost, oh, lost !
And while in never-ending throng they pass,
Out of their laughter, and their love, and tears,
One music of exceeding sorrow flows :
“ Lo, we are dead, are dead ! ”
We are among them, we are following ;
We too are going down unto the dead.
We change, and change is death. What matters it

That in the dewdrops on a thousand fields
The evening cloud may melt, and by the sun
Be lifted up into the skies again ?
The old cloud is not. And the notes of life
May still combine into new harmonies
After the old one dear to us is lost.
And all we knew will change and be no more.
O God ! to think that all the past is dead ;
That, like a land left evermore behind,
It never shall be mine to see again
The days of old, the calm unconscious days
We left behind us. 'Tis a world of death,
Each moment something vanished that was here,
And man a dying watcher by the dead !

And what am I, who thus bewail my fate ?
What art thou, O thou miserable thing,
Thou paltry unit in the multitude,
The innumerable children of the earth,
Whose weary cries of madness, and of hate,
Of hope, and misery, and vice, and love,
Age after age are lifted up ; and fall,
Lost in the void eternal, purposeless ?

O what am I ? An awful consciousness,
A consciousness of isolation dark,
Has grown upon me, tracks me as a fiend :

I am wholly isolated, incomplete,
My soul a terror to itself, alone,
Lost, weary, without resting-place or goal.
Would I had trouble I might battle with !
Work which had any object in the world !
The world? What is the world? All things have
grown

Phantasmal in mine eyes, become unreal.
Doth anything exist? [*He goes to the window.*
The night falls like a weight upon the land ;
The rain is dismal in the leafless woods ;
The air is clammy as a sick man's hand ;
Oh, for a change ! a sudden voice of storm,
A tempest full of power, and fire, and sound,
A hurricane insane, to shake the earth
To its foundations ! Would I were abroad
In dark mid ocean, dashed from wave to wave
Upon a spar, that I might fight for the life
I now despise ! Oh, for a howl of winds !
A tempest white with snow, and red with fire,
Mid which, upon some mountain peak, to stand
And hear all hell about me ; feel the cold
Fight with my blood,—for anything but this.

[*He returns to the fireside, and hides his head in
his hands.*

Alas ! the old ideal, it is gone !
Love and allegiance to the laws of life
Are now rebellion, and distrust, and scorn ;

And that first joy of a divine belief
Is now the wrath of a sublimer despair.
Hark ! hear I not the anthem of despair ?
Wrung from the hearts of those who live to-day,
Whom time has taught ? The old ideal is not,
And this is what remaineth in its stead.

Sad, oh, sad is our fate !

We have wakened, and found ourselves conscious
of life,

To know we shall vanish ; from out of the deep
Of eternity risen, to look on the strife,

The beauty, the wonder, a moment to keep
A hope that endeth in hate,

A fire in ashes, a purpose in sleep,

Sad, oh, sad is our fate !

Phantom of phantoms, I

In a universe warring ; the good and the ill

Co-equal, divided, unruled, without plan,

Or if plan like the scheme of an impotent will,

That planned what it could not complete, and
made man—

A promise put forth in a lie—

Who arises, and knows himself under a ban,

And, if God were, would curse him and die !

Who looks upon sin and on shame,
Upon truth and love, mingled through all the sad
earth ;
The house of existence divided and torn,
And hope in the future, and bitterest scorn,
And beauty, and lives without blame,
Brought down unto death as they rose into birth ;
And the end of them all is the same.

In vain shall the earth remain green,
And sail through the sunlight for ages to come.
Though a golden age dawned on it, made it all fair,
In the end it will perish itself ; and the sum
Of its lives, all the purposes, love, and despair,
The glory, the light that was seen,
Shall have left no result, no more trace that they
were,
Than if they never had been.

Dust and ashes alone—
Fuel to feed some devouring sun,
Matter to fashion new planets again—
Hurled through the universe, formed and undone,
Through endless mutations ; new lives and new
pain,
New laws, new promises shown,
New knowledge heaped up, new lives lived in vain,
And all in the end overthrown.

We have wakened and found ourselves here :
Half divine in our scorn for the life we behold,
And our yearning unquenched for what might
and should be ;
And for love of our dear ones to life we still hold ;
By our hatred of evil from shame will be free ;
And, though the dark end is near,
We will quit us like me, and stand forth and be
bold,
And go to the death without fear.

Yet sad, ah, sad is our fate !
We thought — ay, our hearts, it but yesterday
seemed,
Were glad with such promises, strong with such
trust ;
The green earth was fair, in its sunshine we
dreamed,
And love came and looked on us, ere we were
thrust
Out of the golden gate.
Ashes to ashes ! dust to dust !
Sad, oh, sad is our fate !

Ay, but I swear no weakness, no despair
Shall shake our great ideal. This shall be :
To live and labour for the great world still ;
To make what is less evil ; still to help

Our weaker brothers on the weary road,
Whose goal has lost its promise ; and with those,
The comrades of our journey whom we love,
And soon shall lose for ever, to stand firm
And knit old ties, and meet our fate unmoved.

If God is false, oh, we can still be true !

If there is no God, we can still be men !

*From a distant room through the open door comes the
sound of FLORA singing.*

Weeds and flowers grow and die ;
Sunlight never is withholden.

There were flowers long ago,
Others coming by-and-by ;

For the sunlight's sake they grow,
Not for their sake is it golden.

Hope and sorrow, joy and strife,
Years and pleasures, new and olden,
Leave us, though their love has stayed :
Love grew not because of life,
But for love's sake life was made,—
But for it were un beholden.

SCENE X.—*Cliffs above the shore. A winter
afternoon.*

FLORA (*sings*).

How the wound heals itself! how the world rights
itself!

Hearts love again be they never so true.

Something is gone from us, changed the old song of
life :

How the heart sets itself unto the new !

Is not the world full of love and forgetfulness,

Old songs forgotten, and sweet ones unsung ?

What is a wound, or a flower, or a memory,

What is a song to us, while we are young ?

Whether a flower be for bridal or burial,

How shall we know, ere we pluck the white bloom ?

Seed of Love's sowing, shall Love also gather it,

Or shall it lie in the end on his tomb ?

I grow weary of my maidenhood.

Would I had been a man ! I would have seized

The chances manhood offers, lived a life

How different to half these modern men,

Whose days are commonplace and colourless,—

Their whole life made one folly by the fear
Of winning the name "fool;" who lop their tree
Of Life, and make it pollard, sprouting forth
In trivial loves and labours. Nay! my love
Shall be a soldier, one who scorns to show
A maiden his heart's tenderness until
Men have beheld its strength. Oh, but the fault
Is ours, that men are not what once they were.
The Spartan mother made the Spartan son.
No Roman maid would give her love to one
Whose life had not been offered first to Rome,
But we!—We take the first fair householder,
Whose only claim is that he owns a heart
Which flutters at our presence. Oh, the fault
Is ours, and we forget our woman's right,—
Our right of giving heroes to the world.

The wonderland, the dim sweet wonderland
In which we dwelt of old, is left behind;
Another we must seek. This dear old home
Is changed not, but I yearn to feel the pulse,
The heart beat of a wilder, stronger life
Than peaceful days bring here. Yet none could ask
For memories more sweet than I can count.
No record but is pleasant:—from the days
When we were children, playing hide-and-seek
In the dark corridors on winter nights,
Ambushed, half fearful, breathless, all things still

Except the great clock ticking on the stairs,
Or distant steps pursuing ; or would sit
Round father in the firelight, listening
To stories of poor shipwrecked mariners,
Or travellers in the lonely wilderness ;
Or when the summer holidays again
Brought us together on the breezy sea ;
Or in the meadows at the hay-making ;
Or prisoning the wandering swarm of bees ;
Or on wet days, within the golden barn
Humming with pulses of the winnowing,
When the rain beating on the world outside
Made all within more merry. Simple things
Touched with the mystery of an unknown world.
That mystery is lost, but there remains
A greater wonderland around us still
If we would see it. So the rhyme assures :

This is the land we looked for.
Here voices touch us gently,
Suddenly waking within us
Or gathered from over the sea.
The kind and wonderful voices,
They speak the truth of existence,
Truth, the wonder of wonders,
They show us the soul of all things,
They touch the shadow and semblance,
And set the reality free ;

They sing the song of the world that is
To the music of what might be.

And the meaning that dwells in all things,
The story that lies at the heart,
Is the same ; the infinite story of all
Whereof each telleth a part.
A story too solemn and mighty
By a single voice to be uttered,
Too deep and holy a secret
To sleep in a single breast.
But the voice of each makes truer
The voices of all the rest ;
And each repeats of the story
The part which it loves the best.

[*She meets* STAFFORD.]

What! you here?

STAFFORD.

Yes. I have come to say good-bye.
I'm going Westward for a holiday
Among the prairies, with my emigrants.
I knew where I should meet you.

FLORA.

Westward? now!

You must mean Eastward, to the war, I think?

STAFFORD.

The war? No, I have better work on hand
Than shooting at my neighbours ; we keep men
At State expense on purpose for the task
Of our destructive labour. I prefer
Productive, on the lines of Adam Smith.

FLORA.

Ay ! you may easier strike fire from wool
Than heroism from your hearts to-day.
Comfort's your mistress. Is the world a sty
Where men are put to fatten, or a field
Of battle, where, if need be, they should die ?
And you, our modern English gentlemen,
How will you prove your manhood ? What is left
To try your courage, your self-sacrifice ?
What have you done for England ?

STAFFORD.

Well, we try

To civilize the world, keep taxes down,
And——

FLORA.

Oh, 'tis unworthy !

STAFFORD.

Ay, Flora, you have all a woman's love
Of finery ; and dress a hungry world

In rich attire of fancy. Ay, you hate
The meanness of the naked facts of life,
And cling to thoughts of an old chivalry
Which wears not now a feather in its helm.
Nay but there still remains a chivalry
Not less than that of old. I read your heart
Too well to doubt that, if you knew the world
Which I know, saw the suffering which it holds,
The strong man maddening for lack of work,
The children without food, the woman shamed,
You would be first to cry, that there is now
A new ideal, a new chivalry.
If you had lived in old times you had been
A lady to have died for in the lists,
A woman who had made the man you loved
A hero. And I look upon you now,
A flower among maidens, and I know
No deed I could not dare for your sweet sake.
Ay, sweetheart, for you know my life is yours !

FLORA.

Oh, Herbert ! what should make you think—what
word—
What word can I have said ?—You cannot mean it.
You are my friend—you are my dearest friend,
But oh, beyond that, nothing—

STAFFORD.

Nay, sweetheart, but you know my life is yours,
And you are mine.

FLORA.

Oh, do not speak of it. I am not yours.

STAFFORD.

I know I am not worthy of your love.
I am no hero, bring you no great deed,
But I could die for you.

FLORA.

Yes, you are worthy ; worthy of a love
Greater than mine could ever be. But I——
Oh, Herbert, do not speak of it again.
I love you as a friend, a dear, dear friend,
A brother—always. Oh, forgive me, dear !

STAFFORD.

But I must have you, Flora. Nay, I will !

FLORA.

I have no love to give you—no such love
As that you ask for. Oh, be generous
And say no more !

STAFFORD.

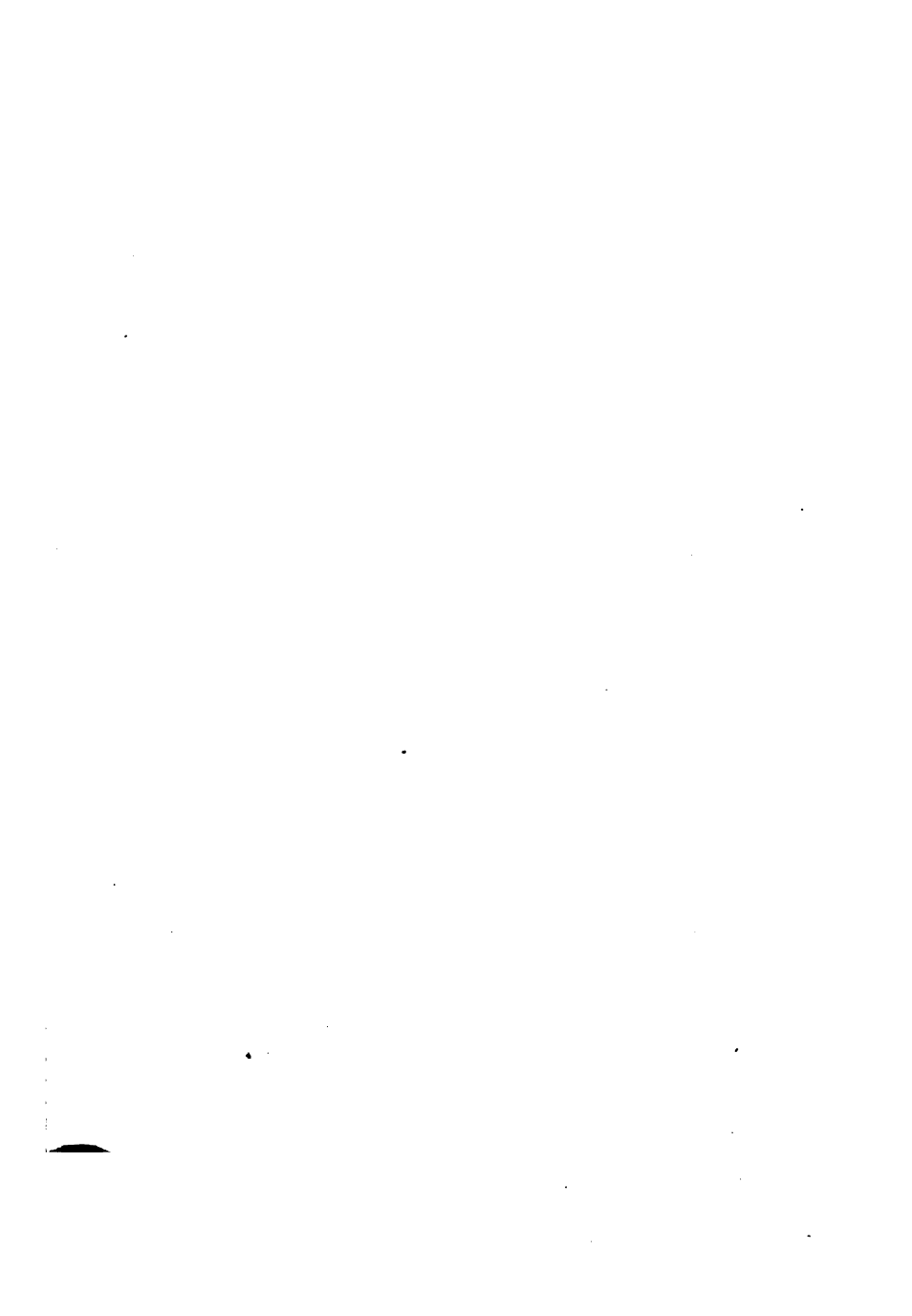
Mine is a love too strong
To plead with. I am man enough to bear
This trial. When I come to you again—
No hero—whether my sweet maiden's love
Is given or denied, she still shall see,
That 'twas a strong man's utter love she won.
Good-bye! Oh, I had rather been unborn
Than have known life and not have looked on you.
You will remember—sometimes. Oh, good-bye!

END OF PART I.



PART II.

(After an Interval of Two Years.)



SCENE I.—*Advanced trenches before Sevastopol. Starlight and snow.* PILGRIM and LIEUTENANT CAMPBELL.

PILGRIM.

Cold, Campbell?

CAMPBELL.

Ay, cold it is. This night work, lying out,
Cools down one's ardour. Any brandy left?

PILGRIM.

Here, just a mouthful. Yes, it cools your pluck !
You want to see your enemy to fight ;
Then you forget the danger till 'tis past.
Oh, to have been in that great charge the Greys
And Enniskillens made at Balaclava !

CAMPBELL.

Yes, 'twas well done. Yet now I'd rather see
A good warm fire and a bowl of punch
Than all the charges that were ever made.

Let's have a smoke—thank God, I've half a pound
Of Cavendish left still !—and talk of home :
My thoughts are full of seeing the old friends.
I wonder when we shall ?

PILGRIM.

Next summer, perhaps.

CAMPBELL.

You know 'tis four years since I went away.
There will be changes ; I was but a lad
When last I saw them, and there seems some chance,
So many of our fellows have been killed,
Of going back a captain of the host.
I wonder if they're thinking of us now,
Around the fire in the dear old home ?
Reading the war news anxiously perhaps.
God bless them !

PILGRIM.

Your home is in the Highlands ?

CAMPBELL.

Yes ; in a pleasant vale among the mountains,
The house built up against the ruined walls
Of an old castle, where our ancestors

Lived and held all the land you see from it—
Of which, except the house and a few fields,
Nothing remains to us. A lonely place
It seems to some, the neighbours few enough ;
But we were never lonely—in ourselves
A good strong party,—and in school days, too,
We always brought some fellows back with us
To spend the holidays. It may be changed
Now we are scattered ; but we'll bring old times
Back with us when we gather there again.
Well, there is nothing better than the thought
Of one fixed place, where you were born and bred,
To think of as your home, where'er you go.
So many homes are moved from house to house.

PILGRIM.

Yes, that takes half the charm away from home.
I'm glad that I shall go back to the place
I came from ; and I never knew how much
Home meant before I left it, or how sad
It is for those, like many round us here,
Amid the strife and danger, to reflect
There will be none to look for their return,
Or care much whether they're alive or dead ;
No loving sisters to make much of them
Or little brothers eager to be told
About the fighting.

CAMPBELL.

Ay, that's hard indeed.

When all this work is done and we get home,
You'll come and stay with us. We two have grown
Like brothers ; and you'll be the same to them.
What times we'll have in the old Highland home !
There's two good miles of fishing near the house ;
Grouse shooting, too—if that won't be too tame
Since shooting Cossacks ; and on summer days
We'll let them see how lazy we can be,
And lie out in the meadows with the girls,
And make them read to us, and fall asleep.
I've pretty sisters, Pilgrim. Now, don't laugh.
I think I'm near as homesick as a girl,
And talk like one.

PILGRIM.

Go on ; my heart is quite as soft as yours.
Not that I am sorry——

CAMPBELL.

What a strange freak of yours to come out here.
An artist ! but you should have been a soldier ;
You have a taste for fighting, we have seen ;
Do it for love, not duty. Now, to-night
You might be warm in bed, inside your tent,
Instead of in these trenches.

PILGRIM.

Well, I was restless, and I came out here
To work the fever off.

CAMPBELL.

Ah, no doubt,
You'll paint some famous picture of the war,
And give your special friends a place in it.
But when you come with me, we'll give you themes
For pictures in our mountains and our moors.
I'm thinking of them as they used to be ;
I'm sorry they'll be changed. There's Kenneth, now,
Who was a chubby boy at college then,
A man with a degree ; and Marian
A married woman, with a son forsooth ;
And Eily, she was fifteen when I left,
A little maiden, with the prettiest face
I ever saw. Such chums we used to be !
They know you, Pilgrim, from my letters home ;
You'll be no stranger——
They're opening fire again.

PILGRIM.

A sortie of our men, but no surprise.
The devil ! See their batteries ; no fear
Of catching them asleep. They're cheering now——

Our men—I know their cheer ; the Russians can't.
Ah, they are driven back there, I believe.

[Cannonade continues for a time, and ceases.]

CAMPBELL (*after a time*).

It's growing colder : time we were relieved.
I wonder the men stand it as they do—
No grumbling anywhere. Stay here for me ;
I must go down the lines, and have a word
With little Maitland at the other end.
They say he'll get his company !

*[He goes through the trenches among the men,
and returns. Firing recommences on the
right.]*

PILGRIM.

Is that the relief there, Campbell, coming up ?
No ; it's too large a mass—more probably
Another storming force. I think they're French.
Inside our parallels, you see ! Look out !

CAMPBELL.

They've taken us in flank ! By God, they're Russians !
Pass back the word there, Pilgrim. Men, lie down !

SCENE II.—*Another part of the trenches, half an hour later. Moonlight.*

FIRST PRIVATE.

That warmed me, Dick. I did for three myself!

SECOND PRIVATE.

Warm work, you're right! How quickly they sneaked
up

And came upon us! I was half asleep

Before we got the order to lie down.

They couldn't have been thirty yards away

When we got up and charged them. 'Twas well
done.

I heard the captain singing out, "Well done!"

As we went through them. He's a plucky one.

FIRST PRIVATE.

My left arm's done for. I can feel it now

The cold's got in.

THIRD PRIVATE.

Where's Adams? And where's Charley, and where's
Smith,

And half our fellows? Hark at them, my lads!

They're groaning there, outside. Come on, my lads!

Or some of these damned Russians, prowling there,
Will kill them while they're down.

FOURTH PRIVATE.

It's death, you fool—it's near as light as day—
To show outside the trenches !

FIRST PRIVATE.

Well, I'll stand by my old chums, anyhow.
Who's coming ?

*[Four jump out of the trenches, and after a while
they return, each with a wounded man.]*

DYING MAN.

You'll tell the missis and the little 'uns
I thought o' them. So long, mates !

MAITLAND (*coming hurriedly down the trenches*).

Campbell ! Has any one seen Campbell there ?

SEVERAL.

No, Sir.

A PRIVATE.

I saw him fall out in the open, sir,
When we were following them.

PILGRIM.

Good God ! Come quickly ; show me where he fell.
You shall not be forgotten afterwards.

*[They leap out of the trenches under fire, and
after awhile return with CAMPBELL, and
lay him on coats under cover.]*

CAMPBELL (*faintly*).

That was good work ; they got what they deserved.
Thank you, old fellow, and my other friends.
'Twas hard to die out there away from you.

PILGRIM (*cheerfully*).

You'll get all right, old chap ! Has any one
A drop of brandy there ? Thank you, my man.
Take a good pull.

MAITLAND.

They'd better take you in
And have your wound dressed. It will not be long
Before I am relieved, and come to you.

SERGEANT.

It's risky, sir, to stir outside the trench.

CAMPBELL.

I'm better now. Let me stay here awhile.
I feel it when I move—here in my side—
But not much when I'm still.

PILGRIM.

You'd better go, old fellow.

CAMPBELL.

Presently ; let me rest a little now.
I think I shall pull through it, after all.

MAITLAND.

Stay with him, Pilgrim ; I must go.

*[Half an hour passes, and CAMPBELL becomes
unconscious, and wanders.]*

CAMPBELL.

Come on, men ! follow me ! Well done, well done !
That settled him. Come on !—O God, I'm done !—
The cold ! You villain, did you say 'twas cold ?
You'll find it warmer soon in the other world.—
Who spoke to me ?

PILGRIM.

Here, help me rub him.

*[He chafes his limbs, and pours more brandy
down his throat.]*

CAMPBELL.

That's your voice, Pilgrim. Yes, that's what we'll do.
They know we're home; we'll give them a surprise,
And walk out from the village—that, you know,
Is where the coach stops,—walk out to the house,
And take them unawares. What did you say?
About four miles from here—a pleasant walk
This summer evening.—Ah, 'tis new to you;
I know it, every field. Those are the mountains
Against the sunset. We'll drive over there
And picnic some day. Here's the carrier.
Good evening, Malcolm. Don't you know me? Ay!
He thinks me changed, though. This is my old
friend:

We fought together.—Ah, but it was cold.—
How's the wife, Malcolm? We are half way now.
The inn, the Campbell Arms, by Donald Forbes,
Good stabling, hay, straw, corn.—Lie down, men!
Charge!—

What bells can those be ringing?
That's the old church; my father's buried there;
He was a grand old laird; there was no fence
Or wall could stop him—and he charged on them
And cut them down, and drove them from the trench—
My side, my side!

Oh, hear the bells! My mother had them rung
To welcome us. Who dared say you were dead,

And they were tolling for you? Yes, the knave,
The damned false Russian, said that you were dead.
I slew him for it—Ah, we're nearly home.
Here comes the parson in his phaeton.
He'll show you the best place to throw a fly;
He never would use minnows.—Eily, come!
Your pony's waiting; you shall try a jump
This afternoon. Give him his head a bit,
And then, ah, Eily!—Pilgrim, we are there.
This is the avenue; it's quite the same.
I see the marks are still upon the tree;
We cut our heights upon it, but they're grown,
They're grown up with the tree. Eh, Monk, good dog!
You know me, then, old fellow? Good old dog!
And here's the lawn; and there they are, you see
There out upon the seat before the house—
The mother, Kenneth home from college too,
And Marian and her baby. Pilgrim, look!
That's Eily picking roses on the left,
And turning, smiling in the old sweet way.—
Where are they? Oh, where are they? Where am I?

PILGRIM.

You've had a dream, old chap, of what we'll do
When we get home.

CAMPBELL.

The cold! I'm getting weaker. Well, I'm done.
How sad for them; they'll never see me now.

I can't pray now—I hardly ever prayed.
It seems a sneaking thing to pray to God
When you are dying, if you never prayed
When you were well ; but if you know a prayer
Or anything of that sort, say it, lad.

PILGRIM (*with great emotion*).

Don't fear, old fellow ! No, I'm sure you don't.
God loves you even better than we can.
"Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be
afraid."

CAMPBELL (*faintly*).

That was my mother's voice. Hold my hand, Pilgrim !
You'll give them all my love. Tell them I wished——
Ah, Eily, kiss me !—See, we're there at last.
They're waiting for us there outside the house,—
This is the old home !—— [*He dies.*]

SCENE III.—*A new settlement in the Far West.*

SONG OF THE PIONEERS.

We are free ! We have broken the chain ;
We are strong, and our horses are fleet ;
And we sweep through the realms of the plain,
Like the wind through the grass at our feet.

We have fallen on our birthright at last ;
We have come to inherit the earth ;
And the strength of our lives, and its strength,
Shall receive from each other new birth.

The land lay awaiting our day :
It is ours, far as vision can reach ;
We have nature around us to sway,
And forget the old battles of speech.

And we laugh when we think what we were,
The lords of creation forsooth,
Who neither could do nor could dare
With the courage of manhood or youth.

Where the fire of the soul could not burn
In the used-up and poisonous air,
And its strength into danger was turned,
Or devoured itself in despair.

The prairie flowers bloom at our door,
Alone in the wilds is our home ;
We behold the land none saw before,
The mountains that foot never clomb.

Our dwelling is lonely and rough,
But 'tis built not for such men as you,
Whose suburban delights are enough,
With the opposite house for a view.

And if you would come to us, choose,
Think well ere your journey begin :
The fleshpots of bondage to lose,
And freedom and manhood to win.

But come hither, strong men, leave your trade,
Ere all become stamped in one mould ;
For first by the man must be made
His character, rather than gold.

And souls are not fashioned in chairs ;
Leave the book about nature unturned.
Most wisdom is his who most dares ;
Most calm who from nature has learned—

Leave the makers of parties and creeds,
The gossip and noise of the street ;
Oh, come ! here is room for great deeds,
And space for the little ones' feet.

'Tis right that each freeman should have
Freehold from his God, his own hearth ;
And shall one be another man's slave,
Or pay him for space upon earth,

While here there are regions unclaimed,
Fitted all the world's poor to support,
And rivers and hills to be named
By the dwellers in alley and court ?

We must go from our fathers' abode,
Though we love it, and leave it with tears ;
While young we must make the new road,
And move through the world pioneers.

There is much to o'ercome and endure—
The pillow not soft as of yore ;
But hardship and labour can cure
The ills that consumed us before.

Oh, who would go safely through life
By the pathways which others explore,
And know not the danger and strife
Of the way never ventured before ?

And, whether we fail or succeed,
We are free, we have conquered our fears ;
And 'tis glory enough if we lead,
And move through the world pioneers.

STAFFORD.

O waiting land !
O picture full of meaning, region vast,
Unknown through all the ages of the past,
Beautiful, generous, waiting to be manned !

O mighty land, thy story is untold !
The same sun which made ancient harvests gold
Shone also here ; the deeds of other times,

Of ancient chivalry, and warfares old,
Are with us ; but thou hast no song, no lore—
We have no record of thee, nothing more
Than as the dreamland of old poets' rhymes.

I look ahead : the time is near at hand.
No more through silent realms the river flows ;
The song of dayspring rises from the land ;
The wilderness shall blossom like a rose.

The hills and woods and plains, from sea to sea,
Will mould new lives, will hold associations
For millions yet unborn, and stronger nations
Will here develop in the day to be.

O waiting land !
Some day when all is held, and all is known,
Impossible the sight now given to me,
The solitude, the glowing mystery,—
Impossible the deep significance
And grand potentiality I see
In lonely waste and prairie-land's expanse—

Would God the struggling people of our towns
Could but be brought out here to these wide lands,
Which wait for them ! But in this unjust world
Is scarce a want but somewhere might be filled,
Or homeless thing but somewhere has a home,

Or life but somewhere waiting for that life
Another is, if 'twere but possible
The two were brought together.
I know a hundred filthy, darkened courts
In our old cities where God's light and air
Are shut out all the year, and little lives
Are blighted ; and I look around me here,
And see the fair great country lying barren,
Soon to grow fruitful if those lives were here,
And make them fruitful. And, alas ! I know
How many a life goes barren to the end
Because the other life which grew for it
Is nowhere found.

And he is happier too,
Happier, who never finds his home at all,
Than he who, seeking, after many days
Finds it, and lo, the house he thought was his
Belongeth to another. He goes forth
Thrice houseless, for no other would he have. —
Ah, sweetheart—sweetheart mine, no other home !

SCENE IV.—*Theatre during a pantomime.*

GREY (*muses*).

I wonder how the old friends are these times ?
The parson died, I hear, and so they all
Have had to leave their home ; and Herbert gone.

Changed since the old time and the pleasant days
We used to have together. Changes ! changes !
And I—how changed am I ! These two short years
Have taught me something of what men call life,—
Though death would be the better name for it.
My heart is not as clean as it was then ;
And when I first began the soiling of it
It cost my conscience something, as a boy
Grieves at the first blot in the copy-book
He meant to keep so clean, but afterwards
Is careless of how many more he adds.
Well, we must sow our wild oats, I suppose !

MAURICE.

Here come the girls ! And there's your pretty one ;
Your modest fairy, Henry. She looks sad.
[*The ballet dances, and retires.*]

NELLY (*dressed as a fairy, behind the scenes*).

The last night of the year—a crowded house ;
The last night of this weary, hateful work,
The heat, and noise, and laughter, for a while.
Sewing all day, and dancing all the evening
Half naked for one's bread ; and then at home
A father sick. And I must not look sad,
Because the ballet is a thing of joy,
And black looks spoil its meaning. Some of them

Are really happy, too, I think ; but I,
I never have been happy !
It's two years now since our Dick went away.
I would not wish him back in this dark world
Except for one thing, that he might have seen
The change in father ; for, when Dick was gone,
Dick's words remained, and he gave up the drink,
And then fell ill—I think for want of it—
Because he had no strength, and no good food.
And every day he grew more weak, and now
I almost think he's dying, and will die
Unless he gets some better food and air
Than I can give him. And to think of it,
It makes me love him so : for our Dick's sake
He gave the drink up. O my God ! my God !
What can I do for him ? After to-night
The little I can earn in dancing here
Will come no more, and he will have to die,
Unless I—— *[She turns very pale.]*

The other day Min gave a poorer girl—
And Min is nothing but a ballet girl—
A sovereign ; and I asked her afterwards
How she had got so much ; and then she told me
How money might be got more easily
Than sewing, ay, or dancing ; and she laughed,
And told me that my pretty face was worth
A fortune if I chose. And I was sad

And angry with her. But she laughed in scorn,
And asked what such as we had got to do
With virtue. Was it still to go half starved,
Our great reward some day to wed a man
Who probably would beat us, and whose life
Had not been of the purest. What was life
For us? The ladies in the boxes there
Might keep clean souls, just as they kept clean hands.
And so she left me.

And such poor girls ! Ah, how I have despised them,
Held them beneath me, would not walk with them,
Because they had gone wrong and I was pure,
Proud, and ungenerous. And now, and now,
Have I a right to keep my self-respect
At such a price ? to let my father die
To keep my own good name ? Would I not die ?
Is it not ever held the noblest thing
That one should for another give his life ?
And what if I should sacrifice for him
More than my life ?—ah God ! far more than life !

The fairy land, the painted river there,
The palace, and the little fairy queen,
The darkened theatre, the mass of heads,
The ladies in the boxes, all appear
So strange just now ; and my poor helpless life
So strange too, and unreal, as though I were
Some other person looking at myself

So we must now go on and dance. Well ! well !
I see that gentleman is here again
Who spoke to me last night as I went out.
I did not answer him, but, perhaps, who knows,
If he should speak to me to-night . . .
I might . . . God help me !

SCENE V.—GREY *alone in his room at night.*

GREY.

Sin spoils life's sparkle, muffles the good laugh
The world affords. 'Twas humorous to watch
The actors making farce of tragedy :
The little villain of the market-place,
The broad-cloth Christian of the solemn smile,
The ruler, posed, like Moses on the hill,
With feeble arms supported either side
By priest and soldier ; ponder Time's last fruit,
The young emancipated modern soul,
From which the dogmas of transmitted faith
Have peeled, as might an onion's outer skin,
Others remaining and diminished bulk ;
Mark how the old earth, like a citizen
Whose girth increases quicker than his brain,
Grows portly, as the Briton spreads in it,
And bellies to triumphant commonplace.
Oh, it has brought my mood for many a day
Sweetest content, to contemplate the fool

Set in the midst of this great universe,
Whose laws he thinks were fashioned for his growth,
Its beauty to enrich him,—as a pig
Might take its snout-ring for an ornament.
This is the best life gives : to look on men
Drunk with its wine, or else with overmuch
Of its cold water solemn, and to laugh
At both in turn. Ay, life has no such gift ;
And I have lost it, now that I have joined
These vintage gluttons in their revelry,
And found my shafts turned inward on myself,
For I am weak—so pitifully weak,
That if I play the part of the good man,
I laugh myself to scorn, and if the knave's
I tremble with the damned. Yes, I am he
Who made a bond of faith to an Ideal—
Ah, heaven, 'tis humourous !—to make my path
A search for truth ; and nobly I commenced
My delving on a dunghill. I am he
Who swore to join the few who stand in the breach
Against the foeman of the common good,
And, lo ! I find myself a camp-follower
Among the enemy, dividing spoil.

Ah, Nelly ! I have seen a wounded bird
Turn on the slayer a strange, dying look.
And such a look was yours. Alas ! poor bird,
If you had only been less beautiful

Or stronger winged, the shaft had found you not.
And I ! Why must I ever see your eyes
Look thus at me ? God, what a world we make it !

SCENE VI.—NELLY, *after leaving GREY, on the stairs
leading to her attic. Late at night.*

NELLY.

My mind is all a blank ! I cannot think !
What have I done ? What am I ? Dick, ah, Dick,
Don't look at me like that ! Was it last week
That I was dancing at the theatre,
Or years ago ? But it was all, God knows,
For father's sake. And I am lost, lost, lost !
I hardly dare go in—he thinks me pure—
Or let him see my face, or kiss me now.
Poor father ! Oh, I wonder what he thinks,
The man to whom I now have given myself ?
Given ! ah, would to God it had been given.
Sold, I have sold myself ! And oh, I love him !
And he, perhaps I ne'er may look on him
Again. He loves not me ; he must despise me—
Thinks me . . . Poor father ! I will live for him ;
And here I have some wine for him at last,
And then to-morrow we will go away
Into the country for a little while,
And he may then get well. [*She enters the dark room.*

Father, I've come! I've brought you something, too.
It's Nelly. Ah, poor father! he's asleep.
The fire gone out, too. How cold it is!

[She lights a candle, goes to the bedside, and takes his hand.]

How cold he is! How pale he is! Father!
I cannot hear him breathe. Father, it's Nelly.

[She lifts his head.]

O God! he's dead! He died when I——

[She falls on his breast, and faints. Later on in the night she revives. The light has gone out.]

Ah, I remember—dead!
And no one at his side to take his hand
Or say farewell. In this dark garret.
Father! oh father! What is it all for now?
Too late; he gone; I lost, all lost.
And I have sold my soul for a less sum
Than Judas sold his Master! Nevermore
To see you, daddy, hear you speak to me;
And Dick and all gone. But, thank God for this,
You never saw my shame. You thought me pure
And innocent; and you are now in heaven,
And Dick is with you. Oh, if you can see,
If you are able now to look at me,
Your poor, lost, sinful, ruined, little maid,
Remember why I am so! O my God!
And yet I love him—he who ruined me,—

The first who ever kissed me, except you.
All my own dead now ; all else lost to me.
And yet to think, an hour or two ago !
If he were here now, would he comfort me ?
Alas ! he would not. No, he loves me not.
How should he ? I will take his money back ;
I would not touch it. Oh, my heart is broken !
Poor, cold, cold hand ! God, kill me, make me
mad—

Anything, anything but this blank hell.
Why was I ever born ?
Eh, daddy, there's a smile upon your face.
I think I must come to you very soon.
They'll let me come to you ;—they must ! they
must !

I've nothing left to live for, nothing left.
Drowned, did they say ?—she drowned herself, poor
girl !

Yes, the old story. Time to go on again
And dance for them. That gentleman is there
Again to night. But oh, I am so tired.
And Dick, we'll go into the country soon,
And you shall see the flowers and the birds,
And daddy, darling—— Dead ! What is dead ?

*[She sinks asleep on her FATHER'S neck. A ray
of moonlight falls through the window on
the bed.]*

SCENE VII.—*London.*

FLORA.

If only things could be really
More as we thought they were !
If the world we used to picture
Could only be found somewhere !
For it seems all disappointments,
And castles built in the air.

There was sorrow and sin enough in the world,
By every one, though, I was told ;
But then, I thought, such scope for the good,
So much to withstand and uphold,
So strong a pulse, such progress of man,
In cities mighty and old.

But when first I went through a London court,
And looked through an open door,
I thought, " O God, can this be the earth
I used to live on before—
The earth where flowers grow in the fields,
And the sea that breaks in on the shore ?

Alas ! for the little children !
The lives without any morn.
The thought of them always haunts me,
And their faces hardened and worn,
Till I sometimes think it were better,
Better they never were born.

But still, in spite of the worst of the worst,
I believe it will all be right;
And maybe love on account of sin
May rise to a nobler height,
As trees, that are set in a valley,
Grow higher to find the light.

Through all the darkness and sorrow,
The victories love has won,
The good that endures through the evil,
Are a promise that 'twill be done ;
Even as rainbows are woven
From struggling beams of the sun.

Ah, but such sorrow to conquer !
So little that one can do !
The clouds so heavily gather,
And the rainbows are so few ;
And sometimes never a rift at all
For the light to struggle through.

If only God had told us,
Why He allows it all !
Why His beautiful seed of life
Into such soil should fall,
To bear no flowers of love divine,
Or flowers so few and small !

If only things could be really
More as they ought to be !
Or if we had faith to see in it all
The love we ought to see ;
For what, compared to God's love of the poor,
Is the love of a girl like me.

If only all who are happy,
If only all who are strong,
Would take a share of the weak one's load
And help the weary along,
How light a burden the world's would grow,
How easy to bear the wrong !

Oh, that the race were fairer,
The prize less hard to be won !
Some start so far behind the rest,
Some have no strength to run ;
And one man gains enough for ten,
And ten but enough for one.

Pleasures so heaped together,
That one the other doth kill,
Labour laid upon labour,
Ill increasing with ill,
Ever the rich man richer,
And the poor man poorer still.

Since first we came to London,
All this has weighed on my mind ;
And going among the sick and the poor
Such a different thing I find,
So hard to what it used to be
At home in the days behind.

At home ! Ah, how I long and long
The dear old place to see !
I wonder whether everything there
Is just as it used to be ?
And when I shall see them all again,
And whether they think of me ?

Sunset here in the city,
With the tumult of hurrying feet ;
A glimpse of it over the housetops,
Finding its way to the street ;
It looks so strange, and out of place,
And sad, and incomplete.

A glory comes for the moment
Over the dingy tiles :
A sudden thought of the ocean
And beautiful far-off isles ;
A child looks upward a moment
With wondering eyes, and smiles.

The light dies off, and the tumult
Goes on far into the night.
Ah, how, amid the struggle to live,
Can a soul retain its sight ?
In a year or two the little one smiles
No more at the glimpse of light.

And I think of the sunset shining
Far away by the sea in the west ;
The gathering shades among the hills,
Where the village lies like a nest ;
And all the land is beautiful,
And still, and full of rest.

The old men on the little quay
Are pacing to and fro—
Ten paces only, and they turn
With measured steps and slow,
In the way they learned to walk the decks
At sea long years ago.

Behind are the snow-white houses
Of the little climbing street,
Where the men lean over the garden gates,
And smoke and talk of their fleet ;
And the girls are all so happy,
And the flowers all smell so sweet.

And some of the doors are open,
And the garden behind is seen ;
And behind again the sloping woods,
And depth beyond depth of green,
And here and there a break in the trees,
And a peep of the sea between.

And the breeze coming up from the water
Is cool now the sun has set ;
And the trees grow darker and darker,
And the flowers with dew are wet ;
And the twilight falls through the windows
At home—oh, it seems ours yet.

Behind is the old back garden—
My seat in the pear tree's shade,
The bees asleep in the corner,
With half their honey unmade ;
And beyond, in the sad, sad churchyard,
The grave where father is laid.

And night comes on, and all is hushed,
And the stars shine over the deep :
The only sound you can hear in the world,
Before you are quite asleep,
Is the rustling wind in the rose trees
That in at the window creep.

Oh, to have the old times again,
Just as they used to be ;
Old talks in the summer evening
In the garden under the tree.
Oh, it all might be, and so much besides,
If only—— Ah, well, we'll see !

If only a girl were able
A little her love to tell,
Let out the secret that must be found,
Nor fear whatever befel,
Before it was asked to give the gift
She is able to give so well !

Say that a flower hung
Over a river bank,
None other near to it,
And the stream loved the flower,
Found through its pleasant course
Nothing so dear to it ;

Lingered in passing there,
Kept every bud and bell
Mirrored in purity,
Longed with a wave to kiss,
Rise to the spot where it
Grew in security.

And if an angry sun
Drained half the river dry,
Took its cool wind away,
Till the poor flower grew
Weary and wearier,
Faded, and pined away.

Were it not possible,
Were it not beautiful,
After long hours again,
If, ere the flower died,
Back were the river brought
In the sea-showers again?

Filled up the flower bells,
Touched all the fading leaves,
Healed the sad heart of it,
Came were it could not come
As it flowed formerly,
Never a part of it?

Say that a certain love
Near, yet divided still,
Never quite part of one,
If taken quite away,
One day from heaven fell
Straight to the heart of one!

SCENE VIII.—*Village churchyard. Evening.* PILGRIM
at his father's grave.

PILGRIM.

Fragment of three years life, part of the story of the great world, told by the little English churchyard. A few more simple lives completed; a few more graves. Twilight falling, a hush of wind in the trees; and I alone among the old scenes,

Musing on the kind old memories.

This one new grave! What meaning it has for me! regret how bitter, love how strong. Ah, would that he could have known my love for him, my desire to have been more worthy to be called his son! One grave! the old home taken away, new faces at the windows and in the garden, old faces sorrowful afar. Long years ago—the pleasant voice telling tales to the children, the kind word, the loving hand—all no more. Only the memories—they cannot be taken away—

The sorrowful and kind old memories.

Still, is not this our own? All things pass into memories, and love makes them live. Our father is not here; old times are not here. Haply we shall look on both again, nor surely one without the other.

An old tale has not the same meaning for us told in a foreign tongue ; the same stars have a different light for us seen in an alien sky. And if we shall see again our father, he were not the same to us without the familiar scenes about him—

The beautiful and kind old memories.

Two graves in the world ! two loves grown deeper !
two hopes arisen ! My father is gone, and my friend
is gone. I have looked upon the face of death ; but
it is beautiful. O death ! thou enemy of self ! who
can behold thy face and bemoan his fancied ills, or
brood on vain regrets ? Without thee life were infinite
selfishness—infinite indifference ; but thou makest it
earnest, and momentous, and mournfully sublime. O
thou concentrator of our being ! we can forgive thee
for coming so soon ; for if thou camest not at all we
should forget to love, and know not hope,

Nor the blessing of the kind, sad memories.

Hush of the twilight, sound of the wind moving
gently in the yew trees ; the old grey church, the
little village beyond, and the deepening sky above.
All as it ever was, as though it had fallen asleep in
the olden time, and had not awakened ; and, like a
dream in the sleep, these few more graves,

Hallowing the old sweet memories.

STAFFORD (*walking through the fields towards the church*).

After three years! The parson dead, the old friends gone, sent away from their home, everything else unchanged.

Three years! Time to build a city in the new world; but no change in the old place, nor in the old folks at home. The same faces at the cottage doors; the same coats on the labourers' backs; the same smells in the cottage gardens; everywhere welcome greetings;—but the greetings I want most are not heard.

Here in the little village, twilight falling, the ringers practising at the church. Oh, the old world sound of the bells! Far away, out in the West, it is morning on the prairies, and our pioneers are getting to horse. Away in the East it is night on the forsaken battlefields—night on the lonely graves of our countrymen.

Peace in the little village by the sea, calm of the dying day, peace of the morning on the broad, bright unknown lands; peace, the night, and the stars, on the deserted battlefields;—but here, in England, in our great towns, no peace. The court is crowded; the gaslight flares in the gin-palace; the air is poisonous in the street; the old man finds no quiet place; the little life grows old in its spring. The chamber is costly, the gilding is abundant; there is

refinement without manhood, there is pleasure without repose, there is laughter without happiness. The rich and the poor are met together, and God is the maker of them both.

Ay, but God loves a man, and the devil loves a class. God gives wealth to mankind, and the devil distributes it.

O pale mechanic ! rise not up and curse your rich brother because you are poor ; for, if you had been rich, you would have been like him. There is a home waiting to receive you. O effeminate shopman ! shall women make bricks, and toil in factories, while you measure flannel ? Go West with an axe, and be wise. O puny clerk ! go forth and drive cattle rather than quills. O little lawyer ! your brethren are too many. Leave off fleecing your clients, and rather shear sheep. Forego for awhile armchairs, and music, and marriage ; and these also shall afterwards be added unto you.

London ! ah, when I think of the very evening of my return ! There was a poor girl about to throw herself into the river. She did not tell me her story ; but I knew it was the old story. A minute later, and I should not have been in time. And the good women who have thought for such as she, who make such homes as that to which I took her, surely they are the salt of the earth. Poor girl ! a pleasant face, but sad, sad beyond words : sweet, too, of manner.

Some new interest in life can be her only cure—to be a teacher in the village infant school, perhaps ; to be away from the former scenes, the country, the children round her. I will speak of it to my father.

Here is the old garden. Ah, Flora, my love. I must go to you ! I cannot do anything for you, I who have more than enough, because I love you.

My thoughts go back into the old scenes, the good days that were ; and forward, to touch some that might be. All gathered round you, sweetheart. Dreamland ! dreamland ! We are young, and can love, and day dreams are pleasant, and castles built in the air are good. But you, wise in the wisdom of deficiency, you who, perhaps, once long ago felt the wonder of things, and loved the beauty of the world, and made soft speeches to the maidens of your choice, who have outgrown your sentiment as your heads have outgrown their hair—you have concluded that the baldness of spirit which remains unto you is wisdom. O men of the world ! “Once,” you say, “once we also saw life through rose-coloured spectacles ; but the maidens who seemed angels turned out other, and the beauty of the world was a wonder of nine days.” God keep us from your fate ! So, sweetheart, in the quiet twilight, here in the old scenes, whether there is joy or sorrow ahead, it is good for awhile to dream dreams ; to give ourselves up for a little, and leave open the doors of our hearts ;

till the feeling of the summer night, the calm, the song of the wind in the trees, and the wonder of the skies, are gathered into our lives, and may be a light to us in other days.

[*He enters the Churchyard and meets PILGRIM.*

SCENE IX.

PILGRIM.

Oh, we go lamely through life ! between two opinions
we halt,
Seeing two pictures, two faiths, and leading lives false
to them both.

This is the first of the pictures—let us unflinching
behold.

A world among unknown worlds, a pause in the
infinite blue,

Man looking forth and around, knowing nothing of
whence he has come,

Or what the beginning or end or intent of the life he
perceives.

A little while given for labour, a little while given for
love,

A little while given to tread the beginning of paths
without end,

And then the cold silence of death wrapped for ever
about the poor head ;

The love and the labour and sorrow, the purpose and promise in vain.

For he knows that the earth shall grow old, and humanity fade from its face,

And its matter alone still exist in some changed form of vanishing life ;—

Its atoms and forces alone, which have gathered nor power nor weight,

Nor stored any labour or truth from the bootless existence of man.

And he seeth his life as a lie ; that the purpose which speaks in his soul,

The progress attained in a life, the development reaped in an age,

Are at war with the law of the universe—structures of perishing sand,

Built on the shores of an ocean, which sweeps away all things in turn.

Yet cry he may still : “ Life is good of itself, for a day or a year.

Though utter death be its end. There still were a reason for joy

In happiness found on the earth ; good work to be done in the hope

Ever in making more happy the few little years which are all

For those who are with us on earth, and for those who will come when we go.

Joy! but a joy how forlorn; and does he not scorn
in his heart
The impotent scheme of a life which shows no con-
serving of strength,
And leads no development on to a deathless and
ultimate good.
For if by the death of a race, of a world, rose creation
a step,
Or won any permanent strength, then like heroes
might men give up life
Without scorn, for the sake of the good; but his scorn
cannot fail if he know
That the sum of the good of his life will be burned
with the earth in the sun.
Such is the picture of death,—of a universe having no
growth.

And this is the other picture, the one other faith to be
held.
A world among unknown worlds, a pause in the
infinite blue;
Man looking forth and within, finding on every hand
law,
Always impelled to explore, always a portion revealed,
Always the end far away, always the destiny hid;
Ever with greater heights a wider horizon obtained;
Ever with larger knowledge a nobler universe shown;
Ever with farther vision a nobler soul to perceive.

Always the end far away, always the mystery felt,
Always a volume gained in the choir of the song of
man's march.

Man in an unknown land of mystery, labour, and
love—

A land of beautiful promise, a life wherein nothing is
lost ;

Everywhere wonderful pathways, everywhere truth to
be learned ;

Labour—not labour in vain, but a training for grander
results ;

Sorrow made sweet by its end, and forgiveness made
holy with tears ;

Death but a farewell, a sleep, an absence to make the
heart fond ;

Love—not a passion of youth, to wither and vanish
with age,

But the first warm pulse of the joy of the mightier
heart-beat to come.

Ah, but a cry from the world ! a bitter and terrible cry
Of suffering, hatred, and wrong, injustice and weak-
ness and want :

“ Evil is part of creation, and suffering part of man's
fate.”

Yea, it is part of man's fate to fight against evil for
aye ;

Then 'tis made servant to good—cannot choose but
help on the advance.

Hardships give strength unto strength, and courage of
danger is born,
And doubt makes the will to decide ; and were there
no sin in the world,
Then no forgiveness had been, no sympathy were
there no pain ;
And want wakes the heart unto pity, and suffering
hallows its toil ;
And if there had risen no wrong, the noblest achieve-
ments of man,
Self-sacrifice, courage, and love, had never ennobled
the world.
Evil is breaking of law ; and is it not well it
exists ?
Is it not well man can sin, and was fashioned no
harmless machine,
Having no power to choose ? Ay, though we remem-
ber the cry,
Cry of the suffering hearts—the wounded who lie on
the field—
Is not the suffering good ? The pain of the spirit's
disease
Making us loathe the disease, which had otherwise
crept on in stealth,
Till the whole life at last were corrupt, and its morti-
fication unfelt ;
Making us rise to our manhood, and fight to the death
against wrong.

Such the two pictures of life ; and one of them only
is true.

Which shall we choose?—poor men, whose thoughts
leave our knowledge behind ;

Who ever go lamely through life, and between two
opinions will halt ;

Seeing two pictures, two faiths, and leading lives false
to them both.

Ah, but were it not better, better, where knowledge is
dumb,

Rather to trust than suspect, rather to hope than
despair ;—

Well to have faith in a man, until he is proved to be
false ;

Well to believe life true, and purpose' no lie in man's
soul,

And say of creation, "Not guilty," until we have
proven the guilt ?

Lo, what a light this faith, that the labour will not be
destroyed,

That love will not end with the grave, throws over the
world of our life !

Nought will be finite, complete, done with, and cast
in the dirt ;

But every hour of time, all actions and labour and tears,
United together, and bound to destiny greater beyond,
Make of man's way through the world no longer a
circle to close

In oblivion where it began, but a stage on the way
without end—

A march of progress and love, and death a halt on the
way.

Yet still we go lamely through life, and between two
opinions we halt.

SCENE X.—PILGRIM *on the road approaching CAMP-*
BELL'S home. Evening.

PILGRIM.

This is his dream. The sunset on the mountains,
The river winding through the quiet valley,
The stretch of purple moorland, golden furze bloom
Along the roadside ; this the road we came by,
And that must be the house with ruined turrets
Rising upon the hill beyond the pine wood.
I am not here ; I do not hence regard it.
I am again beside him in the trenches ;
I see it all from there. The skies are brighter ;
The road no longer is like this road, lonely :
We meet old friends upon the way, and greet them ;
Over the hills the distant bells are ringing ;
And they are waiting, waiting to receive us
Outside the house ; and ah ! the happy greeting,
The cheer of his kind voice !

The snows have melted on the field of battle,
The summer flowers are growing now upon it ;
The hostile land, the land of those that slew him,
Yields flowers, blossoms full of love and beauty,
About his grave.

This is the road, then, which we should have come by,
And this the old house, silent, dark, and mournful ;
Where they were waiting for us, no one waiting.
This is the lawn on which he saw them gathered,
His mother, and the brothers, and the sisters
Come home to meet him, and that dearest sister
He spoke so much of. All is still, deserted.
To-night I cannot enter the dark house :
They will not look for me before to-morrow.
They only have the cold hard written word
About his death, the shock of grief, which chills
The heart to stone. And I, who come from him
And bring his messages, must wound again.
But as the waters in the wilderness
Flowed from the stricken rock, his words will free
The flood of healing sorrow from their souls.
Ah, woeful mission !

And this, then, is the house ! far more a dream
Than in his happy dream it seemed to me :
I standing here alone, the falling night,
The silence of the weird deserted house,
The river's monotone, the lonely cry
Of cranes upon the moor, the rustling wind,

The glimmer of the moon-dawn in the east.
And he, where is he? Is it well with thee,
My brother?

[In the distance he hears the sound of DAVID'S pipes.
Oh, hearken! all the sorrow of these hills
Seems gathered in that half-articulate wail,
"The flowers o' the forest."
I think it must be that strange blind old man
He spoke of; I will go to him.

*In the dim moonlight above the river, EILEEN is sitting
with DAVID beneath a tree, as he comes to them.*

EILEEN.

"The flowers o' the forest," "The flowers o' the
forest;"
It was his favourite air. Oh, David dear,
Did ever yet the moorland look so lone?
What shall we do?

DAVID.

He was the last of the race: it was well he should
fall upon the field.

EILEEN.

Nay, it is not well! Wherefore is it well?
My brother! oh, my darling! my poor boy!
And is it true that you will not return?

We have so long been waiting, waiting now
Has grown a habit which we cannot lose,
But still seem waiting for you.

DAVID.

Poor bairn ! poor bairn ! [PILGRIM *approaches them*

EILEEN.

Some one is coming. David, speak to him.
It is his friend, I know it is his friend ;
Speak to him, David, for I cannot now.

DAVID (*rising*).

Sir, you are welcome.

EILEEN (*coming forward with an effort*).

You are his friend !

PILGRIM.

You are his sister !

EILEEN.

Oh, we have waited, longed for you to come.

[*Taking his hand.*

And you ? He held your hand when he was dying ;

He touched this hand !

[*Kisses it.*

Sir, I forget myself ;

I forget everything but only him.
I have forgotten what the place was like,
Or what my thoughts were, ere my brother died.
[*Covering her face with her hands.*
O God, Thou hast forgotten us !

PILGRIM (*in his heart*).
Poor girl ! poor girl !

EILEEN.
You were his friend ; you loved him.
My brother, oh, my brother ! [*Weeping bitterly.*

DAVID.
Come to me, child.
[*He takes her in his arms, and they are silent
for a while.*

PILGRIM.
I will go now ; to-morrow I will come.

DAVID.
Sir, do not blame our hospitality,
That we should suffer you to leave our doors.

PILGRIM.
I understand and thank you. I will come
To-morrow early. Now good night, good night !

EILEEN (*starting up as he is going*).

Nay, I must hear it now ; I cannot wait.
What said he ? oh, what message did he send ?
And did he feel it hard to die out there,
And see us never more ?

PILGRIM.

What shall I say ? There is so much to say.
How speak of his great nobleness and love ?
My brother, ay, he was my brother too !

EILEEN.


Ay, you were as a brother unto him.
He held you as a brother, spoke of you ;
So must you be my brother. Let me hear !
Oh, did he suffer much in those last hours
Before he died ? Ah God ! before he died.

PILGRIM.

He had a dream that he was coming home.
It was a summer evening in his dream,
And all of you were gathered on the lawn,
And he could see you, and was glad, and died
Even on the threshold of his home.

EILEEN.

My poor, poor boy !



PILGRIM.

His thoughts were full of the old days, and you
Whom best he loved ; and he forgot himself
Remembering you all. There ne'er was yet
A braver soldier or a truer man.

DAVID.


Oh, it is well, it is well ; there is still left the old love
on earth and the bond between comrades !

EILEEN.

He wrote that you would come with him to us ;
And you have come, and he is left behind !

PILGRIM.

It was the very night we were attacked
That we were talking of our coming home,
And called up pictures, in the cold dark night,
Of idle English noons among the fields,
And meeting of old friends at eventide.
And then—I can but tell it briefly now—
In one black sudden moment, came the change.
We were surprised ; and every man of us
Grew to the utmost that each man could be,
And, banded, threw away that mighty shock,
And rose and charged, and charged upon our foe
And drove them back. And he was first of us,



Leading the men who loved him, till at last
He fell, and left us victory with tears.

DAVID (*excitedly*).

Oh, it is well, it is well ; for he fell as the brave fall—
he died the good death of the heroes !

EILEEN.

Oh, it is well that, since he died, 'twas thus.

PILGRIM.

And afterward the quiet moonlight came
And fell upon the snow, and as he lay
Dying—— Ah, how he loved you !

EILEEN.

My poor, poor boy ! [*With an effort.*
I cannot bear it. Tell me something now
Of former days, before—before that night.
Will you walk back with me toward the house.
My mother is not well, must be prepared,
[*Smiling sadly.*

So I must send away his friend to-night.
Good night, dear David. [*Kissing him.*
[*They go together, and after a while hear the
sound of DAVID's pipes.*

EILEEN.

Do you know the song? Ah yes, you know the song !

PILGRIM.

“Lochaber no more, Lochaber no more,
We'll maybe return to Lochaber no more.”

SCENE XI.—*Summer afternoon. Edge of the moor near
the village. A storm is gathering.*

GREY.

The old place looked the same, and not the same ;
Hardly a house is altered, nothing new,
And yet so different ;—perhaps as the face
Of one you fancied loved you is the same
After you find you were not loved, and yet
How changed to you ! All my first hopes grew here ;
All my young thoughts were coloured by its scenes ;
And now I look on them for the last time
Before I go away beyond the seas,
And every hill and road and field recalls
Some promise, some high aim, and mocks at me—
A weary, saddened, miserable man,
A failure and a sinner without hope.
There are some lives, soiled for a time by self
And weakened, but yet noble at the root,
Which turn again upon a healthy path ;
And some lives, like my own, seem miscreated,
Mistakes of nature, sickly fruitless trees
'Twere better to root out than cut and prune.
Ay, here I am, a young man still in years,

But with a heart already sear ; no aim,
No hopes, nor any interest in life ;
No faith beyond it, full of bitter scorn,
And hatred of myself, because I hate
All weakness. If I even had the strength
To go my way without remorse or shame,
Caring not whether I had failed or won,
And play the villain thoroughly, I then
Should be less worthy scorn ; but I have been
A kind of loafer at the gates of hell,
With sentimental thoughts of Paradise.
Well, I am going away from the old scenes,
Not to return, and who will care for this ?
The little village life will go its course ;
The old friends will forget I ever lived ;
The earth will make a few more aimless rings
About the sun, as foolish as a beast
Tied by the leg ; and then the end will come.
It touched me as I passed by the old church—
Ah yes, it touched me, thinking of the old times :
The parson's grave there, and the thought of them
Turned out of the old home ; and afterwards
I took a last look, for the old times' sake,
Over the wall, half thinking I should see
Flora as she was wont to sit and read
In the shady garden corner.
How dark it is ! the storm is getting near.
I'll go on through it ; it will suit my mood.

Oh, Nelly, my poor girl !
If I could but have found you there had been
Some hope left for me. So you brought me back
That money, my poor girl, and went again
Ere I could see you, speak to you, or know
Where I could find you ; and I searched for you,
And found you not, poor girl. How sweet she was
What she may now be, and through me, God knows.
If there were justice in the universe,
There ought to be some world beyond the grave
To right your wrongs. God, oh, if God there be,
He will not leave you comfortless, poor girl.
And there should be a hell for me by right.
Yet how much worse am I than other men ?
We all are tempted ; some have self-respect,
Or instincts sucked in with the mother's milk—
Delicate souls that loathe impurity,
As delicate nostrils an unsavoury smell.
In what am I, then, worse than other men ?
And Nelly—I knew not what manner of girl
She was. Oh yes, I picture Herbert's look,
The scornful words he'd use. Self-righteous fool !
A most respectable young gentleman—
[*The storm breaks round him.*
Hell ! am I not this moment in a hell ?
Would that this moment were my last on earth !
Would that I could be utterly destroyed !
And yet I lack the courage and the strength

To kill myself. God ! if thou art a God,
Who could'st create so mean a thing as I
Without perpetual shame at the result,
Yet, if Thou art a God, undo Thy work
And strike me dead with one of these white shafts
Of lightning. Nay ! thou'lt strike some poor old man,
Or little helpless child ; so we must aid
The marksman or go safe. See ! I will stand
Beneath this tree. I never saw a storm
So grand, or——

*[He is struck by lightning, and falls insensible.
A few hours afterwards he revives ; the stars
are shining, but he is blind.]*

Where am I ? (*Touches his face.*) God, I must be dead !
I remember. 'There's no sound. I cannot see.
Black darkness, not like night ; I must be dead,
Or else I'm mad. Dead, and in hell !
Let me explore ; here is a new career.

*[He staggers to his feet, takes a few steps, and
falls against a tree.]*

Ah yes, I know it all ; the lightning struck me.
Not dead, but blind. Ah God, that's hell enough !
I am but as I was without my sight,
A pitiable, helpless, cursed thing,
The brand upon my face ; not that one chance
Of working to alleviate my pain.
But I must suffer sightless, and cut off
From everything without me, all my sight

Turned inward on myself; and what a picture,
What cursed memories to look on there !
O God, in vengeance Thou art terrible !
What have I done worse than all other men,
That Thou shouldst torture me in such a way ?
Strong art Thou, but not merciful or just.
Doth it make sport for Thee and the elect
To see me groping here, as Samson made
Sport for the Philistines. Yet end Thy work.
Can it be good to any living thing
That I should crawl through life, a thing like this ?
Oh, let me die !

*[He sinks exhausted at the foot of the tree, and
falls asleep.]*

*Early in the morning NELLY (whom Stafford has found
and made a teacher in the village school), finds him
lying under the tree. She recognizes him, and runs to
him with a cry, and stoops over him, believing him
to be dead. She is calm, with extreme emotion.*

NELLY.

My love, my love, my love !
So young, my love ! And I of all the world
The one to find you ! Now you are my own
Now you are dead. I have a right to you
Beyond all others, for I love you best.
They shall not part us now.

*[She lays his head on her bosom, her tears fall
on his face.]*

My dear, dear love ! Do not forget me quite,
In the far world you dwell in now. O love,
Where'er you are, in heaven or in hell,
Wait for me ; I will come to you ere long.
If you are suffering punishment for sin,
You will need some kind word or touch of love,
And I will come and share your pain with you,
For I am yours.

*[His lips move. The blood rushes to her face,
and she holds her breath.]*

Dear God, he is alive ! What shall I do ?
Go and bring help ? But oh ! he may be dead
Ere I return. I cannot leave you, love.
O God, our Father, save him, but this one.
My father Thou hast taken, and our Dick :
Give him but life ; though he, when dead, were mine,
And living I must lose him, save him, God !
Sleep, love ; it is your handmaid watches you ;
It is your Nelly. Oh, I never saw
Such trouble in a face at any time ;
His heart is broken with some inward grief,
And now asleep he dreams of it.

[Sings.]

List a sweet song !
O thou disconsolate, weary, and desolate,
Sleep, and thy troubling shall not last long.
Dream not dreams anguishing, all hope extinguishing ;
Weary of life wert thou, weary of wrong ?
There is yet comforting, list a sweet song !

Ah, in thy sleep
What art thou uttering? Are dreams embittering,
Making thee weep?
Cease sad remembering. Over thy slumbering
Watch do I keep.
Dream of thy childhood and peacefully sleep.

When thou dost wake,
Then morningtide will be, all thy tears dried
will be ;
Then I must leave thee, my own way to take.
Yet ere thou leavest me, say thou believest me ;
Kiss me but once for the former love's sake—
Kiss me but once, and then let my heart break !

Sleep, sleep, my love ; but oh ! how came you here
In this sad plight? Sleep on, for when thou wakest
I lose thee. Dear, thou smilest. He is waking !

GREY.

I thought I was in hell ; and lo, a voice,
An angel singing, and a gentle touch
Leading me forth to heaven. Ah, a dream !
I now remember. But who touches me ?

NELLY.

It is your handmaid, sir !

GREY.

Nelly !

[Turning round.

I cannot see ; Nelly, it was your voice.

NELLY.

Even so, it is Nelly, poor lost Nelly.

I shall not trouble you, sir, now for long.

But you are ill ; let me but go with you,

Or bring your friends to you.

GREY (*taking her hand with tears*).

Oh, Nelly, my poor girl, my poor, poor girl !

Have you forgiven me ?

NELLY.

Forgiven ?

Tell me, but tell me you despise me not ;

Tell me you do not think me what I seemed.

I was not ; nay, you only have I loved—

My only sin has been in loving you.

GREY.

And I—— Oh, Nelly, you forgive me, though,

And think my love worth having ?

*[She is silent with joy. He passes his hand
across his face.*

Ah, I am blind ! the lightning struck me blind.

I never shall behold your face again,

Or anything in all the earth.

NELLY.

Oh, it is dreadful ! poor, sad, darkened eyes !
But you may yet be healed, and see again
All the sweet earth (*thinks*), and oh, it is so sad !
And yet my heart is overful of joy ;
For is he not alive who now was dead ?
Asked if I loved him—asked me to forgive ?
(*To GREY*). Oh, let me lead you—you are weak
and ill—

Home to the village. Let me help you, sir ;
Lean on my arm. Oh, let me be your guide ;
And if your sight is gone, oh, let my eyes
See for you also till they, too, are dark !
[*She leads him back through the fields.*]

SCENE XII.—*An ancient chamber. EILEEN alone,
playing old airs in the twilight.*

EILEEN.

Old chords of music, well-beloved songs ;
A sound of falling waters far below ;
A rustle of the night wind in the leaves
Of ivy growing round our ruined eaves ;
The dim land glimmering in the after glow,
The touch of twilight on the land we know ;
The gloaming of old years within my heart ;
The ebbing of sad light along the skies ;

And darkness fallen on our dear one's eyes,
Which makes all twilight of our long ago.

My soul is full of something undefined,
Fancies no words can tell of, far-off dreams—
A memory of something which it seems
Has never been, and none shall ever find ;
Brought of a sudden in a breath of wind,
Lingering in the chords of some old song ;
And far away it leads, so long and long
That all the world we know is left behind.
Ay, as a face transfigured by a smile,
Speaking a meaning words could not reveal,
A nameless beauty, which I can but feel,
Trembles through life and blesses me awhile.

There are in every life untrodden ways
Which others cannot see ;
The pathway upon which we fixed our gaze,
Chose from afar, nor dreamed that there could be
A turning ere 'twas reached ; and lo, the haze
Gathered about us, and we could not find
The way, and slowly, sadly turned us back,
Or fell perchance upon the beaten track,
The safe and dusty highway of mankind.

Ah, the untrodden paths, we see them still !
Lay down awhile the load,

And breathe the morning breezes on the hill,
While we are journeying on the dusty road.

So many paths ! so many ways to go !
And only one that we can ever know.
Only one cup at the river of life to fill ;
Only one cup to hold or break and spill ;
One love the heart can cherish. Be it so !

Oh, as a bird still lingers round the nest
From which her little ones were stolen away,
Hope lingers still for many a weary day
Near the deserted heart, and finds no rest ;
Weaving the picture of what might have been,
Dreaming the end of songs that were begun,
Till memory and hope become as one,
And in the past a future joy is seen.
I know not now, my brother, where to look
For your path ; once our journey was the same,
The old dear path, until the parting came,
And that dark turning which your travelling took.
I wonder if, in some far place unknown,
Your path again will strike into my own ;
Or someday we may travel back again,
Each by the way of coming, till we meet
At that old place of parting ? Oh, 'twere sweet,
Sweeter the meeting for the partings' pain,
After long days of travel to return

And meet you there, and from your own lips learn,
You being still the same in everything,
What had befallen you in your travelling—
To go back quietly through long ago
And find again the days we used to know,
And see again the half-forgotten sights
Of sunlit mornings and of starry nights,
And hear again the sounds so long unheard—
The sweet note in the woodland of a bird,
The music of the wild wind of the earth.
And smell the flowers which there alone have birth ;
Till the old life grew ours again once more,
And earth the same old home we knew before—
An earnest of the life of wider spheres,
The humble promise of the deathless years,
The old kind nurse of all our loves and tears !

My brother, I have lost him from my side ;
But oh, my love has found me ! He for whom
I waited, ever sure that he would come,
Has found me, and my brother was his guide.
The first wild throb of this new love is shrined
In the last love of him whom I have lost.
Oh, they have most to lose who love the most,
And they who lose the most the most may find !

Thank God for His sweet gift of human love,
The blossom of the tree of life. A flower,

Whose root is in the ground, has still the power
To draw its colour from the sky above ;
The rose is cherished by the earth and dew,
But grows and wins its crimson from the sun ;
The flower of sweet love on earth begun.
Grows upward in God's light to find its hue.

We knew that he was coming, watched for him,
Held him a friend for long before he came ;
And then we met. Our eyes with tears were dim,
Our hearts were full ; we could not speak the name
Of our beloved. Silent, by-and-by,
We heard him tell us, with a kindling eye,
How he had fought and fallen ; how the pain
Of death by love was conquered, and he seemed
To hear our voices close to him, and dreamed
That he was back in the old home again.

I think I loved him from the very first.
Something my life had waited for before
Seemed come when he was near ; and all the store
Of love my heart held, hopes in secret nursed,
Thrilled into life, just as a tree in spring
Puts forth its inward life in blossoming
Of tender leaves, that feel the sun and rain
And breathings of sweet air among them move.
And I could now no more take back my love
Than could the tree withdraw her buds again.

He wrongs a maiden, trusting her not well,
Who loves her and is loved, and fears to tell
His love, because his path in life is rough,
His fortune yet unbuilt. If love is strong,
Then trust must go with it, or 'twere a wrong
To love, which for its own sake is enough.

Before he spoke he knew my love was such ;
I could not even then my secret keep.
Love lay awake, but as one feigning sleep,
Waits with closed eyes for some beloved touch.

Though I should never see his face again
Till all our earthly journey we fulfil,
'Twould be enough—I should be happy still ;
For we are one for ever who were twain.
Enough to conquer death and tears and pain,
That he has found me, that our love had birth,
That I have felt the first sweet pulses stir
Of that love which is Life's interpreter ;—
Enough for one life and one little earth.
Now will I be his love for evermore !
With him along the way that has no ending,
From life to life, from height to height, ascending
The far path of the unknown to explore ;
His only ! ay, whatever is beyond
The life we know, whatever change or growth,
I know 'twill strike the same chord in us both,

And only serve to make a closer bond.
Ay, and through strife and failure, pain and doubt,
With all the pictured promises shut out,
He still would find my heart was all as fond.

“Let there be light!” said God, “and there was light.”
The blind earth saw the footsteps of the morn,
And knew its beauty, and the flowers were born;
And good it seemed, and fair, in God’s own sight.
And all my life is suddenly grown bright,
And countless aims and lovely hopes begin,
Since the sweet light of love has entered in
And flooded all my being with delight.

[She goes outside.]

How quiet the world is! This moonlight night
Is like a dream the earth might have of day,
The errant rays of sunlight far away
Culled by the wandering moon, a dream of light.
The silver mist is gathered, wreath on wreath,
Above the river meadows and the stream;
And, like the muffled music of a dream,
The river voices whisper underneath.
And far off are the mountains, dark and grand,
And narrow glens and valleys still as death,
Where haunted cairn and desolate burial-place
Of mighty men of the departed race
Cast sorrowful shadows in a lonely land.
There dwells a sense of wonder everywhere

To-night in heaven and earth ; all things possess
Meanings suggested, vast and fathomless,
Beyond themselves. In every breath of air,
In moonlit cloud, in distant glimmering spheres,
In the dim woods, and in the flowers' scent—
In everything, the night is eloquent
With some great secret lost to mortal ears.
But though the secret is beyond our reach,
Its blessing falls upon us, and, content,
We feel its soul is love, and all is well ;
As from its mother's lips a child can tell
Love in a tone, before it learns her speech.

Love ! oh, can any one whom love has shown
What can be taught by love, and love alone,
Of life's grand meaning ; who, remembering
That love is of all life and growth the spring,
The seed alike, and flower ; who has found
Love so exceeding good,—can doubt that life,
Which is with love for ever interwound,
Is also good indeed ? or can despair,
Because much sorrow needs must come, and strife,
That all is well ? Ay, there is joy in pain,
Good hope in everything ; since God did blend
Love into life with such a tender care
That naught can ever more divide the twain.
And all things that must be, and are, and were,
Work, by one love united, to one end !

SCENE XIII.—*In a fishing-boat off shore.*

PILGRIM.

This is the day of days to be at sea !
With a low grey sky and a wild autumnal wind,
High-running seas, and a good boat under you.
The little fishing fleet is tossed about,
Scattered upon the dark green waste of waves,—
The dark green shoreward rushing crested waves,—
And stouter grow the stout hearts of the men,
For 'tis a day of battle with the sea.

On quiet summer days the sea is best
Seen from the shore, when you can dreaming lie
In sunlight on the cliffs, and watch the curve
Of far horizon waters still and blue,
And list the ripple of the little waves
Under the rocks ; but here, outside in the wind,
You catch the spirit of it, and feel its strength
Rush through your soul, and cry, " The sea ! the sea ! "

STAFFORD.

When I was in the lone far inland west
A great want often grieved me for the sea ;
A yearning for the dark green windy waves
Would come upon me, and a lonesomeness
In knowledge of the leagues of many climes

Shutting me in from any breath of sea.
And oft, in dreams, along familiar shores
I wandered, when the night wind in the pines
Whispered, "The sea ! the sea !"

PILGRIM.

Ours is an ocean planet full of shores ;
A world of seas among the other stars ;
And men are mariners. In after times
The sons of earth, if they outlive the earth,
Will take with them the old sea influence,
Feel the old joy of weather-beaten shores,
And hear old voices singing of the sea.

STAFFORD.

But is it not a good thing to be here,
After the absence of these three long years,
And feel the sea-life, as the gallant boat
Leans to the wind and throws away the waves ;
To see the buttresses of darkening coast
Beyond the rushing waters, and to know
That there the old home lies, and by-and-by
There we shall meet the old friends, see old smiles
In eyes we love, hear old familiar songs,
And linger in the quiet of old thoughts ?
And she whom you have sought, and found, and won,
Will be among us ; and my own sweet love
Found long ago, not lost, but not yet won.

And Henry, too ; poor Henry blind and sad,
Aimless and wrecked. How changed since last we
met !

Yet, haply, time may bring his days some hope,
And we will help to make his darkness light.
You like the cottage ? Not the old home quite,
But soon to grow as dear.

There goes the *Chase*
Across our bows ! She's beating out again.
There won't be tide enough to let us in
For some time yet, however hard it blows.

PILGRIM.

My thoughts go back to the old bond we made
Before we parted, and our great ideal ?
You have been true to it, and kept our bond.
Of Henry I know not ; but I ere long
Failed in my promise, and beheld no more
The light which hallowed all our destiny.
If I had thought less fondly of myself,
Lived less intent to make life's best my own,
To take the fruit before I sowed the seed,
My own life's shadow had not made eclipse
Of all the radiance of the world. Soul failed,
Yet in my darkest days I staggered on,
Though faithless, toward the goal we sware to seek.
A man's faith is the outcome of his life,
The flower of his actions, not the root

Though different trees are clothed with different
blooms,
The flowers fail not if the trees have life,
The same sun gives to them their various hues.
It matters not that men hold different creeds
If they are born of lives in which is growth,
And fostered by one universal trust :
That there exists a good thing to be sought,
A better to be fought for, and to win,
A strength to strengthen, and a love to guard.
This is our new ideal.

STAFFORD.

The old ideal remains. Your soul went forth
In search of Truth upon the waters of life,
Like the dove from the ark, to find no resting-place
At first, but afterward an olive branch,
And promise for the future. Now Life's aim
To both of us is one, although your faith
Takes other form than mine : to make our days
Bear out the new commandment long since old—
“A new commandment give I unto you,
Love one another.” Is there other hope
To strengthen human hearts, and raise the world
From higher unto higher ?

We must obey,
Who are not beauty-blind or sorrow-deaf.
Oh, I have seen two pictures on the earth

So different, it is a curious thing
That both could in one little world be found !
One telling the dark tale of wasted life,
And wasted possibility and force—
Of life, of death, amid our crowded towns,
In dismal streets and sickening airless courts,
Where the river of life is like a stagnant drain,
And women lose their birthright of sweet love,
And men their birthright of the fruits of toil ;
Where some curse God and die, and some lead lives
Deadlier than death, and blighted in the gloom
Are little lives ;—a picture that should haunt
The heart of every man who has a place
Upon the world 'tis found in. And I saw
Another picture, of a wilderness,
Of lands that waited for the hand of man
To make them rich. Ay, over all the earth,
Eastward and westward, may the like be seen.
So here our labour lies, to root out lives
From the foul tangle and the pestilent soil,
And plant them where is given room to grow.
The children, ay, the children, may be saved,
And before God they shall be !

PILGRIM.

You must succeed.

Others will follow you, and, by-and-by,
The silent regions of the setting sun,

The trackless pinewoods of the lone North-west,
The broad savannahs, and the golden slopes
Of wild cordilleras, and all the expanse
Beyond the azure Australasian hills,
Shall be the homes of those who found before
On earth nor space nor welcome.

STAFFORD.

We shall divide our time between two worlds :
Now dwelling in the city's wretchedness,
To gather in its drift and struggling lives ;
Now working with our pioneers afar,
Keeping good holiday from time to time
Among old faces and old memories
In this kind home. Will you join in with us ?

PILGRIM.

Nay, I am back at my old work again.
Art was my first love, at whose feet I learned
The secret of that beauty which is great,
As greatest deeds, to lighten the dark world
And make its progress sure ; to whom my soul
Spoke unrestrained, and found the utterance
Most truthful of the message which it held.
Thus also shall I help you in your work
Better than if I joined you : for my art
Shall be not as the delicate hothouse bloom

On banquet tables ; but as sea-flowers wild,
Tossed in the stormy waves of human life,
And haply leading some poor mariner
Toward that far undiscovered land he seeks.

STAFFORD.

Ay, you are right ! Look out there, Steven ! Luff !
The wind still rises ! Here comes Whitfield's boat
Close reefed ; and that is Henry in the bows !
What do you think about our getting in ?

STEVEN.

We are going to haul now ; or we'll leave the nets,
If you're afraid to risk the waiting, sir.

STAFFORD.

Afraid ! not we, if you are not afraid.

GREY (*in another of the boats*).

Oh, that they could but be restored to me,
These three last years ! They have been, and must be.
No blotting out a page of the book of life ;
No chance of writing it again.
What is their record ? Failure, discontent,
Sin without pleasure, hatred of it all ;
And now what is the promise life holds forth ?
Work without aim, and bonds without true love,

And dismal darkness. The result, called I,
Is all a failure, and should not have been.
Some men there are who, with a fate like mine,
Could find a good in life, and be content ;
Say, " Is there not left friendship, not left love,
Work for its own sake, chance to pluck a soul
Out of the ruin of the past ? " and such.
Even with love denied, for duty's sake,
Some men could face the end and never flinch.
And I must try it. How the heart grows hard
When evil follows evil ! What did I
To merit this beyond most other men,
Whose hearts are gay, who laugh and look at the sun ?
Yet I could bear it if but love remained—
Love, or the possibility of love,
Such as I dreamed of once. For this poor girl,
Who loves me truly, what have I to give ?
'Twas passion once, and it is pity now ;
No room for love between them. She, my love ?
Among all women ? She would die for me ;
And yet some tone, some manner unrefined,
A hundred little things she says or does,
Make my heart shrink against her. I recall
The voices and the looks of ladies fair,
Of Pilgrim's sister, and of Pilgrim's love,
And think, " Is this my love ? this ballet-girl ? "
Yet I must marry her, though half the world
Would call me fool. I can hear Maurice laugh,

And pity me ! Yet curse him ! what care I ?
He was my ruin. I will marry her,
Poor girl. She has been kinder unto me
Than any one in this unkindly world.
Poor girl !

SCENE XIV.—*The same evening, two hours later. A great storm, with a gale blowing in shore. On the beach, beneath the village, the people all assembled amid great excitement ; among them Flora and Eileen ; and at a little distance, alone, Nelly. At the edge of the stone pier a band of men ready to assist as the boats come in.*

GEOFFREY (*whose boat has just come in safely*).

It gets worse every minute. If they save their lives and lose their boats they'll be in luck ; they'll lose half the boats on the shore. Who are in ?

PAUL.

Penruth, Thompson, John Whitfield—his brother's not in though—myself, about a dozen of us. Been coming in since four o'clock. 'Twas hard enough when we came in. Just got round the pier-head between two seas, and up into the smooth water ; ten yards did it. Burley's boat's lost ; hauled him out and the lad half drowned.

GEOFFREY.

Sight of a light there, lads? Stand ready, anyhow, with the line! there's more o' them near, certain.

OLD MAN.

It's ten years since it blew like it. Eh, my God, look at it! every sea over the pier-head.

PAUL.

Clear out o' the way, cap'n, or you'll get washed away yourself. You're not so young as you was. Go back there on the beach and get some liquor handy.

MANY.

The light's gone on the pier-head! Another light! Who'll fix it up? Here, I will! Give it me! Give it, Johnny! Here, Johnny my lad—steady! the rope's fast round you. Under the parapet, and up the steps at the end, you know. Hold on to the iron stays, and then to the flagstaff while the sea breaks, and fix it up sharp before the next sea. Good! He'll fix it! Trust Johnny; he's a rare plucked 'un! There she shines. Damn me, well done! Three cheers! Back there, and tell them to light a fire on the beach. Davis knows the point—line with the end of the pier-head. Giv'em a leading light. Doubt some o' them'll try and make Bideford.

PAUL.

Just before I came in I saw Gilly's boat on t'other tack, making up for Hartland, I expect. He'll try and weather the point, or get under the lea o' Lundy ; and many more o' them likely.

MARTIN.

The young gents are out. I saw 'em go aboard o' Mills' boat. It puzzles me what they want to go out for a day like this for pleasure. Bad enough to have to do it for a living. And the ladies are down there among the rest, poor creatures ! it's time for 'em to say their prayers now if ever it was, God help 'em !

PAUL.

Now, lads, they'll be in on us thick soon enough. Is all ready ?

EILEEN.

Oh, Flora dear, the suspense of it ! If we could do anything, or know anything ! We are so helpless and useless, and oh, the suspense and the waiting !

FLORA.

Yes ; no use at all ! helpless, helpless girls. If we were only able to be ready there with the men ! Look at them ! Oh, I love them for it ! To see

them when the boats come in, linked together in a chain as strong as iron, hand in hand, the farthest out in deep water, and the waves breaking over them. And when the rope is thrown and they are hauling, to hear them sing above the sound of the storm, our old sea-song, "Cheerly men, cheerly men, ho!"

EILEEN.

Oh, Flora! they are our dearest, and they are out somewhere there in that blackness.

FLORA.

Hark! the men are shouting! Is that another boat coming in? No! see the light is blown off the pier-head. Some one is going to put up another. Thank God, he's safe! They're cheering, and the light is there again.

SOME OF THE MEN (*passing*).

There's a boat gone ashore below the point. Come along, half a dozen of you!

FLORA.

We must do something. Oh, see the women and girls here, crying and praying! I'll find out the names of those who are safe, as the boat comes in, and come back and tell them. I know them all. It will keep them quiet. It will be something.

THE OLD SQUIRE.

Stay there, my dear. You might be washed away yourself, if you went down there. I'll go and bring you word as the boats come in, and you tell them. (*He goes.*) Good God! the last boat was broken into match-wood. My son! my son!

EILEEN (*in her heart*).

If he is drowned to-night, my love, my boy, I cannot live without him. My brother is taken, and I will not live without him. Oh, my love, my love!

FLORA (*in her heart*).

If you only knew how I loved you, my darling; how I have always loved you! And you, out there in danger or death, not to know it. When will you come to me? Oh, how long, how long you are coming to me!

EILEEN (*to FLORA*).

Look at this poor wild crowd of women and girls. The men can hear them crying. Let us get them to take heart. Let us get them to sing; it will cheer the men. Look! look! Hark!

CHORUS OF THE MEN.

Ho, lads, ready now!

Haul on steady now!

Put your backs into it !
Gallantly, merrily ;
Cheer'ly, men, cheer'ly, men, ho !

THE SQUIRE (*returning*).

Alexander's boat's in, and he and one of the lads safe. They have just picked up a man on a spar, half dead. They're bringing him up. See, it's Burley ; he's dead, poor fellow, I think.

FLORA.

Let them go back quickly and help ; we'll see to him. Take him into the boat-house ! Everything's ready there.

NELLY.

Must it be always storm and agony ?
Is there no haven anywhere on earth ?
I cannot hope or fear or think or pray ;
I seem as nothing in the midst of life,
Which rushes round me, like the blinding storm.
Hopeless ! He does not love me any more.
I know it all. He said he loved me once,
Made my soul his—and—for his heart is true—
Will not desert me, though he loves no more.
I know it all ! And I will go away
Somewhere, afar, and leave him silently,
And free him from the burden of my love,

Who has so hard a burden without me,
Poor, blind, disheartened. Oh, my poor blind love !
How I had loved you, helped you, if I might ;
Lived for you, only you, or died for you ;
Seen for you, dear, till my eyes also closed !
Love me, how should you?—I who am so poor
In every beauty, I who am so mean,
Yet with such love to give.
Haply when I am gone, you'll sometimes think
Of your poor Nelly ; and a little love
May come back, some day, when you think of her.
Hark ! they are singing, with their hearts so full
Of those who love them.

VOICES OF THE WOMEN AND GIRLS.

“ Oh, hear us when we cry to Thee,
For those in peril on the sea ! ”

NELLY.

Yet, O God, hear me now !
This once ! But bring him safely back to-night,
And take me in his place, my poor blind love !
He will not see ; he cannot save himself ;
Save him, O Father ! Ah, the old hymn brings
An old time back : I see it all again.
Dick ! Oh, our Dick, you loved me, loved poor Nelly !
Would I were lying, Dick, beside you now.

The hymn tune brings it all so strangely back—
Father, and Smudge, and Dust.

ONE OF THE MEN WHO WENT TO THE POINT
(returning to the others at the pier).

'Twas Willis' boat went ashore at the Point.
Smashed; and Willis and his mate, washed up twenty
feet, and hanging on to the rocks there, saw our light,
and shouted; say they can't hang on much longer.
Some o' the lads gone round top o' cliff with a rope.

ANOTHER.

If 'twas a bit lighter there'd be a chance for 'em.

ANOTHER *(running up)*.

A messenger's just come in from Cove, riding.
Three of the boats got in there safe at five o'clock.
They'll have weathered Hartland before the worst of it.

FLORA *(coming up to them)*.

I thought you must be so cold. I've brought you
down some brandy.

MEN.

Lor', it's Miss Flora! You shouldn't have come
down, miss. Right, Geoffrey; see her safe back.
Three cheers for Miss Flora! Shout it out, lads.
Three more! That's the right sort o' young lady.

N

PAUL.

Here's weather, mates. Poor chaps! I'll swear there'll be many of 'em ashore down the coast, where there's no one ready to give a hand.

MANY.

Look out, lads! Ready now! Damnation!
Here she comes. Now then, steady!

[A brief silence as a boat dashes past the pier-head, the men forming a chain into the water towards her.]

Now let go! Mills' boat—Well done!
Now haul away, lads!

(Singing).

Ho, lads, ready now!
Haul on steady now!
Gallantly, merrily,
Cheer'ly, men, cheer'ly, men, ho!

[The boat drops round into smoother water.]

PILGRIM, STAFFORD, and the men are
hauled out.

MANY.

Well done, John Mills! well done! You're as good as your boat, and she's the best between Coombe and the Longships. You brought her round in style. Did you see the old squire when

he met Master Herbert? They'll be back again to help in a minute, never fear.

FLORA (*rushing into STAFFORD'S arms*).

Oh, my love, my darling boy!

STAFFORD.

And is it so, my love? Is it all right, then, sweetheart? I must go back and help—no minute to be lost. Look! I must go. There's another boat coming in. I will come back soon. All right, Arthur.

[*They go. EILEEN comes up and takes FLORA'S hand in silence. The men's chorus again.*

EILEEN.

Look, Flora! They've missed the rope! She's driving right upon the shore. What do they cry? Look! she's dashed to pieces! The men are running round. There are three men in the water. Oh, I cannot look!

MANY.

'Tis Whitfield's boat! There they are! The sea'll bring 'em in again. Some one has him! Well done, sir! Mr. Arthur has the lad. Well done!

STAFFORD.

Where are the others? Oh, my God! my God!
That's Henry's face. I saw the firelight on it.

[NELLY *rushes in and clasps* GREY, *and both are*
carried away and seen no more.

SCENE XV.—*Sunset on the coast. STAFFORD and*
FLORA, walking together. At a distance, PILGRIM
and EILEEN.

FLORA (*musings*).

Summer is past, and the harvest is here again;
Those who were far from each other are near again,
 Yet some behind still.
All the old journey the earth has been round again;
So much was lost, and so much has been found again,
 So much to find still!

Oft we were parted, but each time to meet again,
Finding the old words and old smiles more sweet
 again

 Than they were last time:
Every new meeting contained a new bond in it,
Every new parting had something more fond in it,
 Than in the past time.

STAFFORD (*musings*).

These are the golden hours of our life,
These halting-times between the work and strife,
These pauses filled with love—the sudden glow
That floods all life, and hallows all we know.
Such hours in my journey have been few :
My ears so full of the great battle-song,
And cry of the poor world's unrighted wrong,
I hardly heard its gentler voices too ;
And in the world my heart had, but for you,
Grown hardened. Yet there is no rock so hard
But, in its crevices, the sunbeams bring
Some flower forth ; no heart so rough or marred,
But you could win from it some tender thing.

(TO FLORA) I used to wonder sometimes, long ago,
How so much sunshine came into your eyes ;
And now, although they cannot help but smile
Whate'er they look on, yet sometimes they smile
So mournfully. Only because of love,
And all love brings with it, you say ? 'Tis well !
The world is given to teach us love ; and one
Who loves the world must need be often sad.
So, in the quiet evening, you and I,
Here on the farthest edge of the old world,
Against the old-world sea,
Have found a pause in life, for love, and rest,
And musing on the paths which brought us hither,

And all its pleasant windings yet to be.
See what a glowing path the setting sun
Is making o'er the ocean in the west !
There lies our way, too, sweetheart ; there our work.
You will come with me to the distant land,
And be that flower in the wilderness
To soften and keep pure the rough in heart.
See, too, where in the east the skies grow dark
Above that dark blot on the world ! there too
I know your heart lies also, and your smile
Will brighten, as the sunshine is most bright
When it finds clouds to shine on.

FLORA.

Oh, 'tis the next best thing that life can give ;
After your love, dear, to become some use,
Some comfort to the comfortless and poor ;
'And you have given me both, and I am yours.
Oh, it is good, so good I feel inclined
To cry about it all. No, better laugh,
And think how grand a thing it is to have
A whole strong man all to my little self. . . .
Do you remember when you kissed me first ?
Not you ! Do you remember how one day
You found me high up in the cherry tree,
And took away the ladder, and refused
To put it back unless I gave you one ?
And I would not ; and so you went away

Awhile to give me time to think of it,
And while you were away I scrambled down
Without the ladder. No, that time you failed.
But it was in the Christmas holidays,
One night when we were playing hide-and-seek,
You found me in the dark, and afterwards
I often used to hide in the same place,
And no one ever found me there but you.
Ah, love ! how good it is to think about ;
Of all the dear old times we used to have,
Now that I am beside you here, and know
You love your little maiden still so well !

STAFFORD.

Ah, sweetheart ! and what friends we used to be,
In those old schooldays ! In a year or two
A different feeling came ; you were no more
The little wild thing climbing cherry trees,
And doing all we did. You used to sit
And read in the old garden, or to sing
Songs in the twilight to us, grown too old
For hide-and-seek and kisses. By-and-by,
When we get home, you'll sing old songs again,
And dress in white to make it all the same
As once it was. And then, then came the time
When I was sent away across the world,
Because this little maiden's love was gone.

A MODERN IDEAL.

FLORA.

Ah, well ! she loved the whole time all the same.

STAFFORD.

The sun has set ; we'll take our homeward way
Along the meadow paths, for old times' sake.

FLORA.

And when to-night we meet again at home,
How like old times, and yet not quite the same.
My Elsie was a child three years ago,
And Eileen was not with us, and we knew
No face was absent ; and there now are two.
I'll sing the songs to-night that father loved
As though it might be he could hear them still.
And Henry, too—poor Henry ! dead and gone !
Gone, if we call aught gone whose love remains,
Like twilight, which is sunlight left behind
After the sun is set.
All is so still now that we seem to have
The whole world to ourselves. I know my heart
Will treasure up this evening for its own,
To think about and love in after time.
And I shall have a picture of the world—
The sunset on the waters, and the sound,
The long, sweet far-off sound, of falling waves,
The twilight following and the deeper calm,
While all the skies were waiting for the stars,

The soft wind hardly heard among the trees,
The fields of half-reaped corn, the old church tower
Over the hill-top, and I here with you,
Holding your hand in mine, and thanking God.

*[In a little while they meet the others, and walk
homeward through the fields together as the
darkness falls, thus musing in their hearts.]*

PILGRIM.

Now like a ship, with all her sails unfurled,
Becalmed in quiet waters, the old world,
Forgetful of departed storms and wars,
Among the long cloud islands, through the rifts
Of the still deep of heaven, idly drifts
Among the quiet stars.

I knew my love was somewhere, though unknown ;
That one heart in the wide world was my own,
Though where she was I knew not, yet I knew
That one day I should meet her.
Sweet was the unknown maid my fancy drew ;
But now that you are found, I look on you
And know that you are sweeter !

EILEEN.

I think one golden reason of our birth
Among the shades of time ; one use of earth,
Its incompleteness, and its sins, and tears,
Death, doubt, and all the weakness of the years,

Is for the growth of love. We could not know
What true love were had we not first to go
Through trial for love's sake. Wer't not for sin
There were no victories for love to win.
If doubt were not, and all were sure and just,
There were no room for the sweet bond of trust.
And if there were no death, and no good-bye,
To hallow it with sorrow, love would die,
And all our wooing !

Among the countless worlds, the unknown space,
Our little world is as a trysting-place,
Wherein we meet ; a little while we stay
And plight eternal troth, and pass away,
Taking the old love with us when we go—
The old sweet love and true, which still will grow
With our growth, till it win whate'er was missed,
When on the little earth we kept our tryst.

STAFFORD.

A pause ! a halt upon the way !
A time for dreaming and recalling ;
We did not fail throughout the day,
And now the autumn night is falling.

A halt in life ! a little while
In which to be but a beholder,
And think not of the coming mile,
And feel not, " I am growing older."

A stern old man with wrinkled brow,
Urging us on with beckoning finger,
Time seems no longer—rather now
A sweetheart, who would make us linger.

Old times are with us, long ago ;
Upon the land familiar shadows ;
We walk again the haunts we know,
The pleasant pathways through the meadows.

And as we turn and look ahead
To see which way our paths are tending,
And mark some spot we wish to tread
In that long way which has no ending,

Old thoughts still light us on our way,
Old love and laughter, hope and sorrow,
As evening of the northern day
Becomes the morning of to-morrow.

FLORA.

Walks in the day-time through an old meadowland ;
Stars in the twilight, seen through the shadowland
In their old places ;
Voices familiar once again greeting me,
Well-beloved glances silently meeting me
In the old faces.

Thoughts of the old time, out of that laughter time
Mellowed and deepened, return in this interim

One on another :

Giving us glimpses of now unbelov'd days,
Binding us each to each, sweethearts of olden days,
Sister and brother.

Wide is our home here, few are our years in it :
Joys there are many, and sorrow, and tears in it.

Labour long, strife long ;

Meetings and partings, and change on change fol-
lowing ;

But there remains to us, everything hallowing,
Love that is life-long !

EPILOGUE.

World of our wakening ! home in the depths of the
universe,
Fall'n to humanity, all we can know of the Infinite !
We, too, have come in our turn to behold our inheritance.

So, while the earth has pursued the old course of its
pilgrimage,
Others have come and have gone, have beheld and
inherited,
Loved their old home, the green earth, and the sun-
lighted work on it,
Paused in its shade, to look forth on the stars in their
companies,
Fought and kept watch on it. Lo ! it is day ; soon the
night cometh !
This is our watch ; we have come to relieve the
awearry ones ;
Come to keep watch on the earth, and to guard our
inheritance ;

Hold it in trust for the future, and cherish inviolate
All that our fathers of old time have won and be-
queathed to us.

Present, and future, and past, we behold our inheri-
tance.

Into the past we return ; we can wander at will
through it,

Hear the old battle cries, see the red gleams of old
watch-fires,

Dream in its summer noons, treasure sown part of its
music,

And feel the sweet influence reaching us out of its
silences.

Morn of the long ago ! In the world's morn we are
wakening

By the Ægean—the far, quiet, blue, many-islanded,
Tyrian ships in the offing, beneath us the rippling
Made by the waves, where they touch the stone steps
that go down to them ;

Hymn of sweet voices anon, and young virgins, flower-
garlanded,

Making procession devout to the temple of Artemis,
Leading a kid, milk-white, and sprinkling ditamy.

Rome after Cannæ, Rome at the foot of the enemy,
Flower of her legions laid low, of her youth and her
valorous,

In her extremity. What of the old Roman citizens ?
Panic? disorder? Nay, never a brow with despair
on it ;
Nothing to tell what is lost. They are selling and
purchasing
Even the land which the conqueror's army is camped
upon ;
And from the city gates, forth in a body, the senate
pass
Even to greet him, the consul, the baffled, defeated
one,
He who has ruined them ; forth to receive him and
welcome him,
As to a conqueror, voting the thanks of the State to
him,
Thanks to him, in that he did not despair of the
commonwealth.

Fishermen mending their nets by the borders of
Galilee.
Flowers that grew by the roadside that led unto
Bethany.
Stars of the summer-night, stars shining over Geth-
semane.
Whispering of gathering multitudes, darkness on Cal-
vary.
Glimmer of light in the last, and morn at the
sepulchre.

Lo, a great forest land! silent, and moonlit, and
perilous,
O'd as the earth, in a dim, mediæval, forgotten time ;
Deep in the midst of it, up in the moonlight, far-
pinnacled,
Looming a castle, mid shadows fantastic, and whispers
Of voices from elfdom ;—the sound of the tramp of a
horse's feet
Led through the castle-yard, waiting the knight who
came yesterday,
Unknown his quest, unrecorded for ever the name of
him.

Empty the cloisters and garth, for the monks are at
evensong ;
Lights faintly glimmering, down among mournful aisles
echoing,
Rising and falling, the sound of the solemn Gregorian.

Fires of Smithfield—weird light luridly flickering
On the pale multitude. Down to the stake they are
leading him.
'Twas but an hour ago when his wife's arms encircled
him,
When she entreated him, even for her and his little
ones,
But for old love's sake, to swear what they would and
remain with her.

Yet he has gone from her—ay, before God, we forget
it not!—

Gone for old love's sake, and truth's sake, and God's,
to the agony !

Unknown the earth, and strong hearts going forth to
discover it ;

Bands of adventurers sailing beyond the Hesperides ;
Wind-beaten mariners coming again after many
days,

Telling of shores to the South ever washed by a
summer-sea.

Wide ocean solitudes, wastes never traversed nor
looked upon,

Never before through the ages : and lo, in the even-
tide,

Into them looms an old galleon, bound for the setting
sun,

Sinks in the west, and the night falls again on the
solitude.

So they will bury their general where he desired
it,

Even on English soil. Ay, though the spot is so
perilous,

Down at the river side, under the fire of the
enemy,

Still the procession goes on to the place of his bury-
ing,
Even the spot where he fell. They are standing un-
covered there,
Round their old comrade. The chaplain is reading
his requiem,
While the American ranks are opening fire on them,
Thinking them picket or outpost; but still, through
the thick of it,
Calmly the chaplain reads on; and at length the
brave enemy
Find the mistake they made, and in a moment the
cannonade
Ceases, and lo, it is changed to the peal of a minute-
gun!

Legends of fairyland, tales of the morn of humanity;
Night on the plains of the past, and old watch-fires
glimmering;
Tidings of heroes, of men at their posts dying
silently;
Voices uplifted, whose ring faileth not through the
centuries;
Songs of the ages, the music of life and its inter-
ludes,
Even the silence of sleep, and of death, and forget-
fulness.

Records of faithlessness, wrong, and oppression and
infamy,

Weariness, suffering, ignorance, waste of humanity ;

Whisper of struggles unknown, of the brave and
defeated ones ;

Words of the story of old, of the love and self-
sacrifice ;

Help for the poor and oppressed, and good news for
the sorrowful ;

Dayspring of Liberty, age after age ever brighten-
ing,

Conquering darkness, as shafts of the sunrise strike
heavenward,

Thrown from one cloud to another. Oh, this has
been given us :

Even to look through the past on the life of humanity,

Growing from better to better, and learn that 'tis well
with us ;

Learn that they watched not in vain who received not
the recompense ;

Learn that they fought not in vain who beheld not the
victory ;

Learn that 'tis well, and the law of man's life is
development.

So have our forefathers watched for us, fought for us,
hoped for us,

Stored for us knowledge, and fashioned us arts, and
made laws for us,

Keeping hearts strong against evil and warm to each
other,
Who stand as a watch on the earth, in the midst of
the universe,
Waiting the time when we also shall join the departed
ones.



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